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HISTORY OF THE ORIGIN

OF

THE FREE METHODIST CHURCH.

BY REV. ELIAS BOWEN, D.D.

ROCHESTER, N. Y.

PUBLISHED BY B. T. ROBERTS.

1871.

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1871,

BY BENJAMIN T. ROBERTS,

In the Office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.

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SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

BY REV. B. T. ROBERTS.

ELIAS BOWEN, D. D. author of the following work, has been too long, and too favorably known to need any commendation at our hands. For over half a century he has labored, as an able and faithful preacher of Jesus Christ in the M. E. Church, of which he is still a minister. He is one of the few who have not compromised to suit the worldly tendencies of the age. He has not grown proud and formal, because the Church has become rich and popular. He has not changed his doctrines because the times have changed. All along he has borne an unequivocal testimony against sin in the church, as well as outside its pale. In his fidelity in reproving, by pen and tongue, the departure from the primitive spirit of Methodism, so painfully apparent in his church, he reminds us of one of the old prophets. We love to sit at the feet of such a man.

The following autobiographical sketch we copy from the *Northern Independent* of Oct. 26th, 1865 :

"The fifth year of my ministry, being told by one of the Presiding Elders that I was set down for the Montreal Mission, Lower Canada, I went to the Bishop, after failing in my expostulations with the Elder, and told him I was not qualified for so responsible a station, and begged of him to give me an appointment of less importance. I was sent to the mission, however, but at my very earnest request was let off after one year, and returned to the States.

"The next year I was stationed at Utica, no intimation having been given me of my appointment till it was read off in the Conference. Here the weight of my responsibilities pressed so heavily upon me that I entreated for a lighter charge, the station unanimously petitioning the Presiding Elder, as he told me, for my re-appointment. The authorities yielding to my solicitations, I was placed on a little

two-weeks' circuit; but Utica being dissatisfied with their preacher, sent for the Presiding Elder and insisted on my return. I was accordingly sent back to them after an absence of only five weeks, and remained another year.

"During the year, two Presiding Elders renewed the proposition, which they had made to me the year before, to take a District; but in both instances, being assured of the great reluctance I felt, on account of an unconquerable self-diffidence, to preside over brethren in the ministry much older than myself, they agreed to have me excused. But at the next Conference, they had my name placed upon a District without consulting me; intending to take me by surprise, and forestall any objection on my part, by reading out the appointment before I knew anything about it. It so happened, however, that their project was made known to me by a singular incident about two hours before the Conference rose; and, failing to prevail on my Presiding Elder to let me off, I addressed a note to the Bishop, to the effect that they must change my name to some other charge, or give me a location, for I could not possibly serve a District. Upon this, the Bishop and council retired a few minutes, leaving a substitute in the chair, and changed me to another charge. For this absolute refusal to take the work assigned me by the appointing power, however, I had sufficient cause of regret; for God cursed me in my appointments, good though they were in themselves, just four years—the precise term I should have been on the District, had I submitted, as I had promised to do at my ordination, "to the powers that be," and I never repeated the offence. Always afterwards, if I could not persuade them to excuse me from responsible situations—which I often tried to do, particularly the last time I was sent to the Ithaca station—I entered upon them, though "with much trembling," and filled them as well as I could.

"The records of the church will show that I have represented my Conference, in connection with other Delegates, in seven General Conferences of the church, and I am bold to say that I never attended a caucus, or used any other means whatever to procure an election to that body. My name was placed upon a ticket for General Conference for the first time in 1828, and I doubtless should have gone had I not declined to run; as the entire ticket, from which I had prevailed upon them to erase my name, was elected by a large majority. I felt I was quite too young and inexperienced to appear in the law-making department of the church, and hence my refusal to consent to be a candidate. At one of our Elective Conferences, I was assured by a

particular friend—a member of the Conference—who came running to my room, almost out of breath, that a combination had been formed among the preachers to exclude me from the number of Delegates to the General Conference; and unless I attended to it immediately, I should fail of an election. I told him I should take no interest in the matter. If elected, I should look upon it as a Providential ordering, and try to fulfil the trust confided to me; but my preference was, if it should please the Lord, to stay at home. I was elected, however, and went to the General Conference, without either seeking or desiring it.

“In 1840, the Book Agent pressed me to be a candidate for the editorial chair of the *Christian Advocate and Journal*, telling me that the leading members of the General Conference, then in session, were favorable to it, and he was satisfied I might be elected to that post without much opposition. But, as usual, I shrunk from official responsibility, and persuaded him to give it all up. Very likely I should have failed of an election, had I consented to run for the office, but if I had desired it, I certainly should have been willing—nay, anxious—with the encouragement so liberally held out to me, to hazard the result of a trial.

“At the General Conference of 1844, being a member of the committee on the Book Concern, and chiefly instrumental in procuring the adoption of the old Auburn Banner, (I have forgotten the name it then bore,) as a General Conference paper, I was afforded another opportunity, if the following circumstances may be regarded as evidence of the fact, of becoming a church editor. A committee of three, of which I was one, were appointed by the Delegations of three patronizing Conferences respectively, to nominate an editor for the new paper thus adopted. The other two at once proposed to put me in nomination for the office, it being understood that the General Conference were prepared to elect whomsoever these Conferences should designate for that purpose. Here, again, my remonstrance against being promoted to office being yielded to, we nominated Rev. N. Rounds at my instance, and he was accordingly elected.

“But though I might swell the list of instances almost indefinitely in which I have declined proffered honors during my career in the ministry, I shall mention but one more. At the General Conference of 1852, several of my Delegation took it upon them, day after day, for some little time, as opportunity offered, to mention my name in connection with the Episcopacy; often remarking, in the way of mere pleasantry, as I supposed, that they were going to make me Bishop.

At length, perceiving that I looked upon it as a matter of amusement merely, they assured me that they were in sober earnest, and had very little doubt of carrying their point. Upon this, I told them plainly that I did not want the office, and was satisfied that I could not be elected if I did. But having been consulted by members of the Delegations from eight or ten other Conferences upon the subject afterwards, and told that they were all prepared to go for me, I felt that matters were taking on somewhat of a serious form, and it was possible I might be elected after all. I then begged of the brethren to abandon the remotest thought of any such thing, as I certainly was not qualified for the place, and could not consent to be a candidate any way. Now, whether the brethren were sincere in proposing to put me in nomination for the Episcopacy, or not, or whether I should have been elected to that office if nominated, is nothing to the question in hand; it is enough for my present purpose that I at least took them to be in earnest, meaning what they said, and that fearing I should be elected if my name were allowed to run, I shrunk from the possibility of an election, and prevailed on them to drop my name altogether.

"I am aware of the declarations of Paul, 'If a man desire the office of a Bishop, he desireth a good work;' but not to say that Bishop here means nothing else than presbyter or minister of the gospel, I never desired even that in the sense of seeking it, for I was licensed to preach, received into the Conference, and appointed to a circuit, without the slightest application to that effect on my own part. And I have always 'labored as a son in the gospel,' going where I was sent, with one solitary exception, as above noticed, having never asked the first favor in regard to my appointment, as all the Bishops and Presiding Elders under whom I have taken work will bear me witness. I did, to be sure, once ask my Delegation to put me on a certain committee at General Conference; not that on Episcopacy, upon which I had already been placed, as usual; but one of less dignity; and I asked it on account of the great interest I felt in the business that was to come before it. But I have always been sorry I did, both because it was out of keeping with my long-cherished principles and habits, and because of the jealousy it obviously excited in the minds of two or three of my co-delegates, who have scarcely overlooked it in me, as I have reason to think, to the present day.

"And now, let me say to my detractors, 'If I am become a fool in glorying, ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been com-

mended of you,' (rather than traduced,) especially for the fidelity with which I have 'told you your faults.' I ask no commendation at your hands, however; either for reproving you as in duty bound, when you go astray, or for leaving my appointments, where I and every other Methodist preacher have promised, as upon oath, to leave them, in the hands of the authorities of the church. Nor can I entertain much respect for those self-seekers among us who are forever tampering with the Bishop and Presiding Elders about their appointments—forever wire-pulling for place, or promotion in some way, in palpable violation of their ordination vows. I would by no means intimate that all Methodist preachers are guilty of this miserable practice. There are many honorable exceptions, or used to be; and it is with great satisfaction I am able to call up a goodly number, even of modern date, who were always ready to go where they were sent. But never a year passed during the twenty-four years I was on Districts, when I was not harassed almost to vexation in some instances, with the incessant teasings of place-seekers. And it is this class chiefly—of all others the least deserving of good appointments—who now impute to me the weak ambition of aspiring to office, alleging, as a cover of their wickedness, that I have become soured toward the church for overlooking my claims to posts of distinction, and that this accounts for the great dissatisfaction I have manifested for a few years past with respect to their administration and behavior. But beside the besetment, so common to the wayward, of attempting to clear themselves of guilt by implicating others, especially the witness by whose testimony they have been proved guilty, and made to writhe under the eye of public opinion; the very natural rule of 'judging others by ourselves' should be pleaded, perhaps, in extenuation of their unchristian conduct in thus aspersing my character, since they seem incapable of appreciating any other motives of action than those by which they themselves are governed.

"But though men of this description will still find some pretext for believing what they evidently want to be true in respect to the cause of the rebukes I have felt myself called upon to administer to the church, the great body of the faithful—preachers and people—will give all due weight to the representation I herein present of my own course and character. And while I shall consequently be looked upon, as heretofore, with an eye of friendship and charity by the thousands of this class whom I have known and loved, the cause of God and of Methodism, so far as they may be identified with my

character and doings, will be vindicated from an unmanly and most damaging aspersion. Albeit, though I ought to be commended, as aforesaid, for my fidelity to the true interests of the church, the Oneida Annual Conference especially, whom I so faithfully admonished of their sin and danger on a late occasion, still I ask no commendation, no thanks from the church, for occupying my appropriate place, or doing what she rightfully bids me do. Still, I must say, 'after doing all that is commanded me, I am an unprofitable servant, I have done that which was my duty.'"

ELIAS BOWEN.

PREFACE.

“METHODISM is a creature of providence.” So it has long been regarded. And as such, God has ever watched over it with a jealous care; impressing upon it at the same time the seal of his Divine approbation and paternity. The origin, growth and achievements of this peculiar form of Christianity, are such as to leave no rational doubt of its supernatural character. And having God for its Author and Guardian, it can never be overthrown; but will continue to operate and prevail in the earth, through instrumentalities of his own choosing, until its Heaven-appointed mission shall have been fully accomplished and there is nothing more for it to do.

As a *principle*, or system of truth and righteousness, Methodism is as old as the Christian era, being identical with the gospel itself; but as a system of rules and regulations for the carrying out of the great purposes of the gospel scheme, it is of recent date, having originated with the apostolic Wesley during the early part of the last century. Taken altogether, as it came from the hands of its immortal Founder, Methodism is none other than “Christianity in earnest;” being now what it ever has been, and ever will be to the end of time.

It does not follow, however, because Methodism is always the same, that, therefore, it is always known by the

same name, or is always found with the same denomination of people. Adaptation is an essential element of the system; and from the wonderful facility with which it accommodates itself to time, place, and circumstance, it finds no difficulty in taking on a new name, or passing from one association of people to another, whenever there is occasion for it, or the offer of more eligible means for the accomplishment of its legitimate ends, requires such change. As the mountain turtle casts off its old shell, upon occasion, and takes on a new covering more suitable to the purposes of its being; and as the rushing stream, when too much obstructed in its course, leaves the old channel for a new one, where it can pursue its ocean-bound career with more freedom; so Methodism, tied up and embarrassed in its soul-saving operations by an unscrupulous and almost universal conformity to the world in the old church, has been compelled, in order to fulfil its appropriate mission of "spreading Scripture holiness over the land," to leave its accustomed pulpits and altars, so terribly desecrated latterly by worldliness and churchism, and carry on its work through the newly organized medium of the Free Methodist Church.

But, though Methodism has changed its home, it has in no wise changed either its character or its mode of operation. And hence, as it fled to the Free Methodists to escape the trammels of worldly associations, a time-serving policy, and the soul-sickening routine of a lifeless formalism it could no longer endure; so will it in like manner abandon them, should the contingency ever arise, when it is no longer permitted to operate through their instrumentality in accordance with its own peculiar principles and purposes.

It was a fatal mistake with the Jews, that their covenant relation to God gave them a sort of corporate title

to be regarded and treated as his *exclusive* people ; and that the promissory guarantees of the covenant were absolute, securing to them this proud distinction in perpetuity, or rendering it inalienable to them and their posterity forever. They persistently repudiated the idea that the blessings promised in the covenant which God had made with them as his people were only to be continued to them during good behavior ; and hence, when he announced to them that they should perish in the wilderness for their idolatrous and wicked rebellions against him, and never enter the land of Canaan into which he had promised to bring them at the time they came out of Egypt, they accused him of a "breach of promise." But alas ! too late they awoke to the perception of the *conditionality* of the covenant they had violated, when an insulted Heaven proceeding to execute its awful penalties upon them, exclaimed, "I'll show you my breach of promise !" Some other churches also, notwithstanding "these things happened unto them for ensamples and are written for our admonition," have fallen into the same mistake ; the Methodist Episcopal Church (as her high pretensions to piety and prerogative, and her notorious backslidings from God and Methodism at the same time, sufficiently show,) scarcely furnishing an exception. Nor do the teachings of history, assuring us that God has been wont to leave these fallen churches, one after another, and call his people by another name, seem at all to remind her of her own impending fate !

But as there is nowhere to be met a more striking illustration of the truth of our cherished maxim, that "Methodism is a creature of Providence," than in the rise, progress, and permanent organization of the Free Methodist Church lately come into existence ; a brief history of the rise of this new denomination of Christians cannot be unacceptable to those with whom an all-pervading Providence, espe-

cially as it relates to the cause and people of God, is a primary article of faith. To supply this desideratum in ecclesiastical history, and magnify the grace of God for raising up this pilgrim band to exemplify and carry on the work of holiness among men, this unpretending work is now offered to the public.

THE AUTHOR.

CHAPTER I.

DENOMINATIONAL Christianity is the order of God.—Still the church of God is one. Here is diversity in unity—a property which God has impressed upon all his works, whether of creation, of providence, or of grace—the universe around him, in this respect, being made to reflect his own most glorious character. There are three persons in one God; Christ has many members in his own mystical body; and other sheep he has which are not of the same fold or denomination of Christians with any particular church.

They who maintain that the unity of the one universal church of God, or that Christian union and fellowship lie in unity of sentiment, are greatly in error. For all to see alike, or to be of the same opinion, either all must see things just as they are, which presupposes omniscience, which no mere creature can lay claim to; or, if one err, then all must err in the same direction and to the same extent, which is by no means a supposable case. Man is finite; and none but the Infinite can see things just as they are, or know them unerringly. Else the stream can rise higher than the fountain from which it flows, or the effect exceed the cause by which it is produced. Diversity, therefore, is inseparable from human society, and both can and actually does co-exist with the unity—the true spiritual unity or oneness—of the church of God.

Equally groundless is the claim of the Church of Rome

to exemption from all error or diversity of sentiment in matters of religion, for the reason that Christ, who is an unerring Guide, is her leader, having promised to "be with her always, even to the end of the world." The Apostles themselves erred in many things, except when they were under the control of plenary inspiration, which has been vouchsafed to none since their day. And besides, there could not be a more palpable fallacy than to claim infallibility because our Leader and Guide is infallible. Here is, for instance, a perfect mathematician—one who is master of his text book, and can teach "the exact science" with unerring precision—but does it follow, therefore, that the pupil can solve every problem the science proposes? Experience demonstrates the contrary.—He will often fail of the answer required, not through any imperfection of his guide and teacher, but through the weakness of his own understanding.

Nor is it true that the unity of the church of God lies in one and the same church organization, as the Church of Rome and some other bigoted successionists contend. Far from it. Such unity, being merely ecclesiastical or outward, rather than spiritual in its character, would tend to destroy, rather than strengthen, the unity of the church, properly understood, by the friction which bringing together the great body of Christians, with all their denominational peculiarities, must necessarily produce. Diversity of sentiment, then, being inseparable from our fallen race—extending not only to matters of a civil, but of a religious character—taking in creeds and confessions of faith, as well as church government, forms of worship, and things of that sort; there can be no harmony or co-operation—no real spiritual unity—in the practical workings of the church where denominationalism is merged in one and the same ecclesiastical organization.

Such a church must stumble at the very threshold of its undertakings. It could not so much as begin its operations by the settlement of a pastor. Could the Calvinists consent to sit under the teachings of an Arminian who should inculcate the doctrine of Christian perfection, the possibility of falling from grace, or free will? No more could the Arminian, of the Methodist persuasion especially, listen to the doctrine of absolute predestination, the necessity of sin in believers, or imputed righteousness.—Least of all could they agree on a pastor who should be so exceedingly accommodating as to engage to reflect the sentiments of all their various creeds indiscriminately.—Denominational Christianity, then, is clearly the order of God; a variety of religious orders, corresponding to the various theological tenets or creeds of the Christian world, having sprung up from time to time, at the instance and under the auspices of Divine Providence. God is evidently in the arrangement; the different denominations serving as sentinels upon each other, and their mutual influence, by means of the most salutary incentives and checks upon each other's conduct, contributing in a manner peculiar to their separate organizations to the common welfare. Indeed, as a good, strong line fence must be maintained among neighbors, in order to the peace and harmony of the neighborhood, so must denominational churches maintain their own distinctive organizations, in order to the maintenance of the Christian unity and fellowship of the church universal.

Well: be it so, that denominational Christianity is, indeed, the order of God; or that he designs his one universal church should be made up of different denominations, as it actually has been from the beginning; are there not enough of them already in the world? Why add to their number by the organization of another sect, especially an-

other sect of *Methodists*; there now being so many of these bodies in every part of the land? One would suppose that the ground occupied by these multiplied branches of the Methodist family was all covered by the old church, and that it were far better they were all united in one body than that they should undergo another division. So it appears to some—all, indeed, who prefer a dead to a living church—and their prediction is, (the wish being father to the thought, no doubt,) that the Free Methodists will either come to nothing, or discover their error in separating from the Old Church and return to her bosom again, as has been the case with nearly all who have gone off before her. Now, it is true there have been quite a number of secessions from the Methodist Episcopal Church, which have either come to nothing after awhile, or returned to the body from which they broke off; but the leaders of these movements, to say the least, were invariably precipitated into secession by fanaticism, disappointed ambition, personal disaffection, or some such unworthy motive, and, of course, could not succeed. Their own convictions, not to say the hand of God and public opinion, were against them.

But, in the first place, the Free Methodists are not a secession from the Methodist Episcopal Church, or any other religious body. They arose like the apostolic, the Protestant, and the Wesleyan churches; some being cast out of the churches to which they belonged, or driven off for their pious zeal, by the hand of persecution; while the great body of them have been gathered in from the world, or a backslidden state, by a sound and thorough conversion to God through their own apostolic pastors.

The time having come when God could no longer work through the old church, as formerly, he was pleased to raise up another people to take the place and to do the

work which she had so shamefully vacated—overruling her wicked persecution of the faithful within her pale for this purpose. “The wrath of man shall praise him.”—And as the slaveholding South, in her madness to extend the area of slave territory, unintentionally brought about the emancipation of her slaves; and the Jewish church, in like manner, became the wicked occasion of advancing the cause of the early Christians, “who went every where preaching the word and turning great numbers unto the Lord,” in consequence of the “persecution that arose about Steven” at her hands; so the Methodist Episcopal Church, in attempting to crush out the life and power of religion among them, have become the instrument—the unintentional and very wicked instrument—in the hands of an overruling Providence, of bringing this new organization into existence. But the occasion there was for the organization of the Free Methodist Church will be made more fully to appear in the next chapter or two, as we proceed.

CHAPTER II.

THE occasion seen and felt by many of the friends of a living Christianity in Western New York, and some other places, for the organization of the Free Methodist Church, will best be made to appear by showing what the Methodist Episcopal Church was formerly, and what she now is or has been for a few years past. If it should be found that pure Methodism—"Christianity in earnest"—which once characterized and distinguished said church, had nearly died out in her communion, while there was scarcely anything of real vital godliness to be met with among the sister churches of the land; it must, of course, be conceded that the one lately formed by the Free Methodists was called for, and that the Divine Being, who "leaveth not himself without witness" in the earth, might be expected to supply the demand. It is but a brief outline of the comparative history of the Old Church that can be attempted here; and yet the rise and subsequent history of the New Connection is so interwoven with that of the Old, that a succinct sketch of the latter is indispensable to the proper understanding of the former.

The Methodist Episcopal Church, as is well known, originating in a great and long-continued revival of religion, was for more than half a century a living body of Christians, fully answering, (with a single exception, which will be more particularly noticed hereafter,) the following definition of a true Christian church in her XIII. Art., viz..

"The visible church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure word of God is preached, and the ordinances duly administered, according to Christ's ordinance, in all things that of necessity are requisite to the same."

Her early character and mission may be seen also in the standing Address of the Bishops, (Dis. pp. 4, 5,) from which the following extract is taken: "We believe that God's design in raising up the people called Methodists in America, was to reform this continent and spread Scripture holiness over these lands. As a proof thereof, we have since seen a great and glorious work of God from New York, through New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North and South Carolina, and Georgia, as also of late to the extremities of the Western and Eastern States."

In addition to these authorities, the entire early history of the Methodist Episcopal Church, together with the historic biographies of Abbott, Roberts, Emory, Fisk, Hedding, and some others of precious memory, may be consulted on the subject; but a short quotation from a late semi-centennial sermon by Rev. G. Peck, who will not be suspected of exalting the past at the expense of the present, will, perhaps, suffice. He says: "The distinguishing characteristics of the old preachers were their piety, their simplicity and their zeal. As a general thing, they were men of great faith and of much prayer. They had power with God and with the people. Sinners quailed, trembled, and fell before them; and Christians shouted aloud for joy. One of their thundering, old-fashioned sermons sometimes resulted in the conversion of scores upon the spot. Not unfrequently the preacher would close his sermon abruptly, and dash out into the congregation to point some smitten heart to Christ, or pray for one who

was literally roaring in agony : ‘ Pray for me ; O, do pray for me ; I am sinking to hell ! ’ My eyes and ears and heart were witnesses of these things. The old-fashioned singing,” he proceeds, “ was not always harmonious, scarcely ever artistic, but it was more generally devotional, sympathetic, melting. Sinners would be sung into tears, and then into the penitent’s prayer, ‘ God be merciful to me a sinner ; ’ and then sung into shouting, ‘ glory to God in the highest. ’ It was a moral force sometimes overwhelming. There was converting and sanctifying power in the singing. I would that I could hear it again ; but I never shall in this world. The preaching was in thunder tones, and the prayer-meetings were seasons of strong emotion. Loud praying and singing, shouting and falling, were the ordinary characteristics of these occasions. The excitement was not put on or worked up ; it was clearly the result of mighty impulses, occasioned by a Divine inspiration. God was in it, and it was a means of the awakening and salvation of souls.”

Had the Old Church always remained thus, there would have been no occasion for another *Methodist* church certainly, as she could not have failed, in that case, to carry forward the great and glorious objects of her denominational mission—the “ spreading of Scripture holiness over the land.” Much less could she have thrust from her bosom her own most dutiful and devoted children for no other cause than the manifestation of their love to God and Methodism. But when we turn the tables, and look at what she now is, and has been for a number of years past, a very different conclusion will be arrived at.

As intimated above, the Methodist Episcopal Church well accorded with her own definition of a pure Scriptural church of Christ for many years after she first arose, with *one exception*. “ She was clean, but not all.” There was

the plague-spot of slavery upon her forehead from the beginning ; and, tampering with the evil instead of resolving in good earnest upon its removal, it continued to spread and rankle in her system till the whole body became paralyzed. The Bishops and many other leading men in the connection, making common cause with the dough-faced politicians of the North and all the other churches in general, had all along pandered to the slave power, till the nation at large—North and South, Church and State—had fallen under its domineering control ; and legislation and commerce, literature and religion, the pulpit and the press, were placed in abject surveillance to its lordly dictation.

As the Old Church had always some prohibitory rules against slavery, and a strong anti-slavery minority in her membership and councils who were doing all they could for its extirpation, a long-suffering God continued to bear with her until the General Conference of 1860, when the last barrier to the foul abomination was swept from her statute book, and worldliness, and pride, and formalism, and all the fashionable associations and amusements which had been covertly following in its train, broke loose on every hand, the church throwing off all restraint, and scouting evangelical piety as the wildest fanaticism. It was now that God, whose patience had become exhausted, virtually said of a church he had so long smiled upon and cherished, "Ephraim is joined to his idols : let him alone !" A new denomination, taking on the title of the Free Methodist Church, and adopting Wesleyan Methodism—purged from "the sum of all villanies," secret societies, and such other corruptions as "the peculiar institution" had drawn after it—was forthwith called into existence.

It is not the history of the Methodist Episcopal Church, however, that we propose to write ; and, of course, it will

not be deemed appropriate to trace her character and behavior in much detail. It must suffice our present purpose to show generally what she now is, or was when the Free Methodists arose, rather than how she came to be such.

CHAPTER III.

THAT the Methodist Episcopal Church, as a body, is woefully fallen, having lost her simplicity and power, is almost universally believed. Her object now seems to be, not to "spread Scripture holiness ever the land," but to build herself up in worldliness and pride. And although this fact is generally understood and known, the church herself being conscious of it, in proportion as the light is forced upon her; still she claims to be advancing in her appropriate work and character, insisting that there is consequently no occasion whatever for the establishment of another Methodist Church in the land; a few extracts and reflections, showing the utter groundlessness of such pretensions, will here be introduced.

The first extract will be taken from a semi-centennial sermon preached before the Oneida Annual Conference some four years ago from the text, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ, unto another gospel," etc., by the author of this work. Here follows the extract:

"But the great object of our present discourse, is, to portray the defection of the Methodist Episcopal Church from God and Methodism. And having given a brief illustration of the general subject in the parallel we have drawn between our church and that of the Galatians, we shall proceed to show, somewhat more in the light of his-

tory, what are the particular aspects of the case by comparing our *present* with our *former* condition; the comparison having respect, not as the custom is, to numbers, wealth, worldly influence, and the like, which constitute no adequate test of the character of a church; but to doctrine, discipline, and practical godliness.

“1. We shall first notice our defection from God and Methodism in respect to doctrine. And here we have most clearly been ‘removed from him [Wesley, God, or both] who called us into the grace of Christ, unto another gospel,’ on the subject of sanctification, merging this great subsequent change as we do in that of regeneration or the new birth. Mr. Wesley taught a distinction between these two states—using the terms justification and regeneration interchangeably—in the following questions and answers:

“‘Q. When does inward sanctification begin?’

“‘A. The moment a man is justified. (Yet sin remains in him—yea, the seed of all sin—till he is sanctified throughout.) From that moment a believer gradually dies to sin, and grows in grace.’—Wesley’s Works, Vol. VI., p. 496.

“‘Q. Is this death to sin, and renewal in love, gradual, or instantaneous?’

“‘A. A man may be dying for some time, yet he does not, properly speaking, die, till the instant the soul is separated from the body; and in that instant he lives the life of eternity. In like manner a man may be dying to sin for some time, yet he is not dead to sin, till sin is separated from the soul. And the change undergone, when the body dies, is of a different kind, and infinitely greater than any he had known before, yea, such as till then it is impossible to conceive; so the change wrought when the soul dies to sin, is of a different kind, and infinitely greater

than any before, and than any can conceive till he experiences it.'—Vol. VI., p. 505.

"Here we have the views of our great Founder, too plainly set forth to be misunderstood; the views of all our standard authors, and of the whole church formerly, as to the distinction between sanctification and justification—a distinction Mr. Wesley considered equivalent to that between death and dying—pronouncing it infinite.

"The doctrine we now generally hold and teach on the subject, 'removed,' as we are, 'unto another gospel,' may be seen in the following extract, made by Mr. Wesley, from the writings of Count Zinzendorf:

"'We are sanctified wholly, the moment we are justified, and are neither more nor less holy to the day of our death, entire sanctification and justification being in one and the same instant.'—Works, Vol. VI., p. 22.

"Entire sanctification, as taught by Mr. Wesley, implying a subsequent and distinct work from justification, has always been regarded as a primary doctrine of our creed. It is not only found in all our standards, having been held by the whole church—preachers and people—till within a few years; but thousands of witnesses, of the most reliable character, have borne testimony to its reality and blessedness from their own personal experience. But now, the old Moravian heresy of the identity of the two states is pretty generally embraced among us. And its advocates, we are sorry to say, exhibit a virulence in their opposition to the Wesleyan view of the subject which but too clearly betrays their want of the spirit of Christ, and the aversion they feel to the subject of a living piety.

"2. Having disposed of the question of the doctrinal defection of the church, we shall now consider her equally great and desperate falling away in regard to discipline.

"And here we are compelled to say that the Discipline

of our church, no less a rule of holy living than a standard of orthodoxy in former times, has been well nigh despoiled of its authority and moral power by recent changes. To say nothing of those of a minor character it has undergone in relation to dress, free seats, church rituals, etc.—all of which have tended to paralyze the arm of the church in the training of her children for heaven—the change effected at the General Conference four years ago on the subject of church-slavery, by which the last vestige of any mandatory inhibition of the evil was toned down to mere advice, has left us in a pitifully demoralized condition. A wide door is now thrown open to spiritual licentiousness and pride, and wickedness of almost every hue may revel upon our very altars with impunity! If some particular sins are still interdicted by the letter of the Discipline, the authority to punish the offender in these cases is entirely neutralized from the necessity we are under, for consistency's sake, of interpreting such interdictory laws upon the basis of a more recent general enactment which virtually tolerates 'the sum of all villanies.'

"We now say, in effect, to our offending members—our mandatory rules being reduced to mere advice—'Why do ye such things, my sons? for it is no good report I hear of you;' knowing at the same time that they will just do as they please.

"We repeat it, that to place 'the sum of all villanies' upon the ground of mere advice, is to place each and every particular sin—the greater comprehending the less—on the same ground: a course of administration which the most of us, taking advantage of the rose-water legislation of the late General Conference, and drinking into the same spirit of defection which prompted their guilty action in the premises, have already adopted.

"Oh, how little of our early simplicity, our early

abandonment of the devotion to the one great work of soul-saving, still remains with us at the present day!—The successors of Wesley, of Asbury, of Garrettson, and their self-sacrificing lay co-adjutors, where are they?—Where are our Whites, our Cases, our Puffers? And those of the membership who helped ‘them much in the Lord?’ On whom, of all our Israel, has their mantle fallen? Does not a melancholy echo answer, ‘On whom?’

“But as all error, in general, since the foundation of the world—as well in life and manners, as in doctrine and discipline—is known to have originated with the clergy: we shall bestow the burden of our remarks, on this branch of the subject, upon them; comparing them with their predecessors of an early day, as preachers, as pastors, and as Christians.

“1. And first, as preachers. Possibly, the early pulpit of our church may have had less of general science, or of school oratory, than the pulpit of to-day; but in sound, practical theology, and a knowledge of the various susceptibilities and workings of human nature, so necessary to ministerial success, it ‘stood head and shoulders above us.’ Its utterances were plain, pointed, and effective;—‘turning many to righteousness, and building up believers in their most holy faith.’ It might well be said of our fathers in the ministry, that being ‘full of faith and the Holy Ghost,’ ‘their speech and their preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of the power.’ In those days, God was pleased to put honor upon His ambassadors; ‘pouring out His Spirit’ upon the field of their labor, and ‘opening a great and effectual door’ to them on every hand.

“In those days ‘the slain of the Lord were many;’ it being a matter of ordinary occurrence that scores were converted and brought into the kingdom under the preach-

ing of the word. No all-winter campaigns, with a corps or two of extra help, were then necessary to bring about a revival in the church; the ordinary appliances in their hands were all-sufficient for this purpose. It was then they preached holiness—Scriptural, Wesleyan holiness—and that too in almost every sermon; showing forth its power and loveliness in their lives and conversation. And it was then that the most hardened and violent opposers even, ‘unable to resist the wisdom and the Spirit with which they spake,’ were won over to Christ by the power of Divine Truth, or driven from the field of contest with shame and confusion of face. Let the millions now on earth and in heaven, gathered into the fold of Christ through their labors, attest the divinity and power of their faithful ministrations.

“But O, the change that has come over our ministry in later times! How lamentable the defection observable within a very short period. Popularity is now the goal; and in order to reach it, the style and manner of preaching must be changed. The plain, simple style of Jesus, of Wesley, and of Hedding, must give place to a turgid, bombastic display, which makes the illiterate masses gape and stare, instead of ‘bringing them to repentance and to the knowledge of the truth.’ Popular sins must not now be meddled with, as they are too delicate a subject to be treated of in a popular assembly; or, belonging exclusively to politics, the Christian minister has nothing to do with them. Such is the pretext. The true reason is, that few of us can hew to the line in respect to these sins, but the chips will fly in our own face. And then, it would offend our fashionable hearers—driving them from our congregations, and cutting off their support—which will never do. The doctrines, the duties, the institutions of the gospel, every thing connected with religion, must be popular-

ized and adapted to the public taste. 'The offence of the cross must cease;' and cold, moral essays, interspersed with anecdote and poetry, and embellished with rhetorical flights and flourishes, must succeed to the preaching of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.'

"And besides all this, there is a numerous class of the community who can visit only places of amusement; and to secure the attendance of these, as well as to gratify our own carnal inclination, we must convert the church into a sort of a play-house, where the most fastidious pleasure-taker can find the entertainment he seeks. Our bombastic, highfalutin, moralizing declamation will not suffice for this class of hearers. There must be something to excite their risibilities, and fill their mouths with laughter; something of the ludicrous, and the funny; something of the *comico-pious* type, by which the almost universal taste of mankind will be gratified, and the highest degree of popularity and patronage secured.

"The responsive 'amen' of the devout worshiper is no longer looked for or desired among us. Nor is there much in our pulpit exercises to call it forth. Much less do we tolerate the old-fashioned Methodist shouting in our congregations. Such manifestations of pious joy would be esteemed quite disorderly—a palpable interruption of the order and solemnity of Divine worship—and not to be allowed in the house of God. But while we shrink from these pious demonstrations, lest our fashionable hearers should suspect us of sympathizing with a religion the world hates, we can well endure the bursts of carnal laughter, and rounds of clamorous cheering excited by our comical, pantomimic, merry-making exhibitions, and might not be greatly disturbed in our feelings, were the scenes of the declining apostolic church to return;

when the people, instigated by the preacher, were accustomed to exclaim as he was proceeding with his discourse — ‘bravo, eloquent, most learned, second Apollos,’ and the like, to the very great satisfaction of their humble-minded pastor. Such a course has now become the highway to popularity, and must be resorted to at all events, for we must be popular, and there is no other way to gain our end. But the theme is too painful to be pursued, and we turn from it in disgust. Suffice it to say, we exceedingly loathe this religious buffoonry—this charlatanism of the pulpit—this holy fun—so much in vogue among the ministry of our day, and we would now and forever bear our protest against it.

“We are deeply pained with such shameful prostitution of the sacred desk. Nor do we find any relief to our feelings in the reflection that the period is not distant when, at our present rate of deterioration, it will be impossible to distinguish between the pulpit and the stage.

“2. Again, secondly: having contemplated the defection of our ministry in reference to their pulpit performances, we shall now inquire how it is with them as to their pastoral oversight and character. Do they make any real pastoral visits among the people of their respective charges—praying with the families on whom they call, and speaking to each member personally on the subject of religion—as formerly? Are they uniformly found at the stated social meetings of the church, there to ‘reprove, rebuke, and exhort,’ as the case may be; giving the requisite counsel, looking after the delinquent, and promoting the spirit of revival among all classes of the community, as their fathers were? Ah, how changed we are become in these respects! These primary institutions, so necessary to the prosperity, if not to the very existence of Methodism, are almost run down upon their hands—a

The first of these is the fact that the
 people of the world are not yet
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 The nineteenth is the fact that the
 people of the world are not yet
 united in a common love.
 The twentieth is the fact that the
 people of the world are not yet
 united in a common hope.

"And here we must require a little more respect to the administration of Discipline. For this, too, seems essentially one of the duties of the pastor. What, then, is that custom, compared with our early usage in this respect? How far is the dark picture here set forth of the

ministry to be relieved by such inquiry? It would afford us great pleasure to be able to add a few lights here; but alas for us! the Discipline, once a living principle in our hands, guarding the purity of the Church, and aiding her children to build themselves up in faith and love, has now become a dead letter. And here also our defection from God most clearly appears—the life and power of religion invariably declining, and the spirit of worldliness and corruption taking possession of the church, in the same proportion as the administration of Discipline is neglected. Formerly, we were in the habit of arraigning offenders, who would not be reprov'd, for trial; expelling the incorrigible, as well as for ‘a breach of our rules of Discipline, as for immoral conduct.’ But how seldom is either the one or the other done now! Some, to be sure, are said to be cut off on both these accounts; but are all offenders so treated? Are any of them, except the crime of poverty, or want of influential friends, or of presuming to ‘obey God rather than man’—very conveniently termed ‘*contumacy*’—be superadded to their other offences?—These last named sins may not constitute the *ostensible* ground of complaint, but who can say they are not the *real* ground, at least in very many cases, after all,—other names being given them merely to save appearances.

“Formerly, we were a living church, ‘worshiping God in spirit and in truth, and in the beauty of holiness.’ We then prayed with the Spirit, and with the understanding also;’ and we sang in the same manner, as the effect of our devotions sufficiently attested. But where shall we look for much of this sort of worship in these times?—Who now gets those answers to prayer that used to be realized in the ‘pouring out of the Spirit’ upon the praying ones ‘assembled in the name of Christ,’ the prostration of sinners under the power of God, and the so filling

believers with transports of heavenly joy as to cause them to appear to the world to be 'drunk with new wine'?—Our prayers at the present day are usually so formal, and so complimentary both to God and the people, as utterly to fail of their legitimate effect, receiving no more of a Divine answer than those of the prophets of Baal in their contest with Elijah. 'Praying to be heard of men, we have our reward;' our prayers being praised and puffed by the listless, dozing assembly, who cannot for their life tell what we have been praying about, and with this we are satisfied.

"And as for our church music—the surest exponent of the character of our devotions—it can scarcely be regarded as anything else than solemn mockery. The Apostle said, 'I will sing with the Spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also,' placing the music of the sanctuary precisely on the same ground with prayer—the one, equally with the other, belonging to the worship of God, and to be conducted in the same devotional and solemn manner. But what sort of worship is there in our singing at the present day? Do we indeed 'sing with the Spirit and with the understanding,' as enjoined to do, 'making melody in our hearts unto the Lord'? Do we? Instead of the grave, soul-cheering music of other days, inspiring a frame of the purest and most lively devotion in genuine Christian worshipers, and softening the obstinate sinner even into a gracious susceptibility of the preached word by its moving, melting, all-subduing melody; we are treated to a set of light and frivolous airs—inharmonious, undignified, and dissipating to every thought and feeling of the heart—the merest affectation of music—and so miserably artificial as to exclude every element, as well of nature as of grace, from their composition.

"Nor is there any more of 'the understanding' than of

'the Spirit' in our modern church music; since none can understand one word in ten of the hymn pretended to be sung—the peculiar modification of the voice, or conformation of the vocal organs now cultivated; and the speechless, soulless, Christless bellowings of some sort of musical instruments, rendering the articulation of the performers utterly indistinct. Add to this the grating, incoherent, fiddle-faddle interlude by which the tune is interrupted at the close of every stanza, and the monopoly of this branch of Divine worship on the part of a few—often of the ungodly—and Satan himself could scarcely contrive anything more calculated to neutralize the legitimate effect of the services of the sanctuary upon the congregation.

“But this is not all. Our reverence and love of God—the first great branch of Christian piety, as exhibited above—having sunk into mere formalism; it were to be expected that the second branch also—the obedience due Him in the various relations of life—would be found to have degenerated into a loose and easy morality. And such we now discover to be actually the case with us.

“The holy Sabbath is now desecrated among us to a great and growing extent in the ordinary visiting back and forth of friends, the rambling over wood-land and field for purposes of recreation or pastime, in taking from the Post Office and looking over our mail—secular and political newspapers not excepted—even more than any other day of the week; and last, not least, in traveling twenty or thirty miles to and from meeting, as is the case with many of our preachers—presiding elders especially—for the reason that their lucrative, secular avocations, and the attractions of home, leave them no leisure to go to their appointments on a week day.

“With respect to intemperance, we may not have kept

pace with the English Wesleyan connection, whom a correspondent of the *Christian Advocate* represents as a community of incipient drunkards. They, being a little older than we, might be expected to have got somewhat ahead of us in their devotion to Bacchus. But, however we may have fallen behind them in the use of wines, beers, and other intoxicating liquors, as a beverage, still, in that *nastier* form of intemperance, which consists in chewing, smoking, and snuffing tobacco, we can scarcely be outdone. In vain are we expostulated with on the subject by relatives and friends; all sense of the indecency of the practice, and of its offensiveness to all decent people, having become extinct. Especially is this the case with most of our preachers. Still they continue to bow down at the shrine of their Bacchanalian idol, and pay him their eager, filthy, slobbering devotions. The appalling criminality of a practice which has wasted more lives, not to say more time and money, than any other species of intemperance; and of insulting every body they approach, by compelling him to stand aloof with seeming incivility, or inhale the pestiferous atmosphere they carry about them, gives them no concern. They even regard their guilty indulgence as an accomplishment, without which they would scarcely be qualified for respectable society, and scoff at the vulgarity or superstition of those who presume to make it a question of morals.

“Again; the loose and easy morality—if, indeed, it be not a gross immorality—into which our practical godliness has degenerated latterly, may be seen in the custom which has obtained for awhile past, of raising money for church purposes, by the sale of church seats or pews, and then repudiating the title by which they were conveyed to purchaser, by church action—the preachers *approving*, if not *instigating* the abominable fraud, because, forsooth,

the annual renting of these seats, when disencumbered of the claims of their rightful owners, would yield a larger and more certain revenue for their support than could be realized in any other way.

“But the strongest and most conclusive evidence of our defection from God is found in the fact, that having lost the life and power of religion ourselves, we now persecute it in others. It is by this work of hell, more than anything else, that we become identified with fallen churches; for these alone assume the prerogative, and possess the disposition, to persecute others for their religion. It is the church, *nominally*, that has forever constituted the great persecuting power, the civil authorities—whether Heathen, Christian, or Infidel—doing comparatively little in this direction; scarcely anything, indeed, except by her instigation. All the persecutions, in general, from the foundation of the world, may be traced to the church—covered, of course, by the pretended holy purpose of promoting the cause of God by the extirpation of its enemies, particularly those she is pleased to charge with ‘fanaticism’ or ‘contumacy.’

“Who persecuted and slew the Prophets, the Apostles, the Lord of life and glory? The *church*. Who destroyed the lives of more than fifty millions of Protestant Christians in the sixteenth century? The *church*. Who drove the Puritans out of England, and the Huguenots out of France—massacreing many thousands of them in the most barbarous manner,—and hung the Quakers in Boston?—The *church*. Who formerly persecute the Methodists in the old country, and more recently in this, while they sustained the character of a holy people? The *church*. And if the question be asked, Who are now kindling the flame of persecution against the Free Methodists that have lately sprung up among us, and all who go in for holiness in

life and manners, as inculcated by Mr. Wesley, even within our own pale? The same humiliating answer must be given: It is the *church*—aye, the *Methodist Church*! She it is, being fallen to the self-conceited eminence of Popish infallibility and exclusiveness, who excommunicates her best members, lay and clerical—*ostensibly* for ‘contumacy’—the one grand complaint of all fallen, persecuting churches against reputed heretics—but *really* for the reason that ‘her own works are evil, and theirs righteous.’

“We could easily multiply extracts, showing that the above views of the fallen condition of the Methodist Episcopal Church, are generally entertained by the community. The following, however, from an editorial of the *New York Chronicle*, a well-known paper of the Baptist denomination, must suffice:

“‘We attended last Sabbath evening the Methodist Church, corner of Fourth Avenue and Twenty-Second Street, and heard a very good sermon from the pastor, whose name we have not the pleasure of knowing. Our purpose is not to report the sermon, but to express our sense of the contrast between Methodism now and over forty years ago. It exceeds all computation. Then we used, as a lad, to frequent their meetings held in barns, private houses, groves, and in any place affording the least convenience for earnest worshipers. . Now, what do we behold? An archepiscopal palace, with its ample interior spaces, broad galleries, lofty, frescoed ceilings, extended aisles, cushioned pews, done off in costly woods, and floors covered with rich carpeting. Then the worshipers kneeled on the hard floor, and felt themselves privileged to do so in the audience chamber of the Maker who they supremely loved and adored; now cushioned foot-stools, soft as down, are provided for the bended knees of those who condescend to so low an attitude—the most of the audi-

tors remaining in a sitting posture, after the absurd example of the sects whose worldliness was then the object of Methodist rebuke.

“ ‘ We confess to a little gazing to see how the women dressed, when, lo ! it was in the very top of the fashion, their bonnets as lofty and as blooming with artificials, their hoops as expanded, their hair as elaborately ornamented, and their whole style and appearance quite as worldly as they are in our most fashionable circles. Such dressy Methodists as these ! Why, not a man or a woman of them could have passed the door of a love-feast fifty years ago. They would have been doomed together to the lake of fire. The officiating clergyman seemed a modest, good man ; but where was his Quaker suit, his drab, round coat, his long vest, hanging on the hips, or his studied peculiarity in equipage and appearance ? And this lofty exterior structure of hewn stone, this towering steeple, this pealing organ, resounding the praise of God in notes of operative power ; why, the Methodists of our young days would have scouted ye all as the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place.

“ ‘ In putting the two ends of this Methodist half century together, the contrasts rising to our view seem more like those of a thousand intervening years than of so brief a period. And when we look beyond the sanctuary to those pretentious Methodist universities dotting the land, this show of learning, these professors, doctors of divinity, contests for place and power under the Government, and in the high places of society, and compare them with the simple, uneducated people, who appear as their ancestors in the past age or two, we are overwhelmed.— Whence comes this mighty change ? Nine-tenths of this young brood of ministers know not the bird that hatched them. ‘ They forget the rock from which they were hewn,

and the hole of the pit whence they were digged.' They have, they *can* have no such appreciation of their antecedents fifty years ago, as flit before our youthful memories.

“But the saddest of all is the decay of spiritual power. Well do we remember the remark of a plain, hard-working class leader, nearly fifty years ago, that the Methodists would fall away like other denominations, and when they did, their peculiar power would pass to other hands, to leave them a nonentity, in all except exterior show.—Has this singular prediction come to pass?”

“Undoubtedly it has.

“But no farther proof of the apostacy of the Methodist Episcopal Church need be sought, than the silence of her warmest advocates on the subject of her *present* spirituality, while at the same time they acknowledge her spirituality in former days. The Rev. G. Peck, in a semi-centennial sermon to which we have already referred, may be cited as an example in point. This sermon, though evidently intended as a eulogy upon the church, rather than as an impartial review of her past history, presents no evidence of the wonderful progress and pre-eminently high standing he claims for her, except what is found in an increase of numbers, wealth, education, refinement, social position, worldly influence, and the like, which he certainly would have presented had the facts in the case been such as to justify it. Could he have said that the church was ‘growing in grace and in the knowledge of the Saviour, Jesus Christ,’ how much it would have been to his purpose, and now gladly would he have availed himself of the advantage thus afforded him. But if no evidence of the existence of any spiritual life in the church could be found for the occasion of a semi-centennial discourse, when so loudly called for; and the church-press could everywhere endorse the production as a true portrait of

the character and condition of the church, as it actually has done, in the utter absence of such evidence; it is clear no such evidence exists."

We shall not formally pursue the subject of the fallen condition of the Old Church any farther. Nor need we. If any doubt of the fact still remains, it can but be removed as we proceed to trace, as we shall now do more directly, the particular circumstances under which the Free Methodist Church arose, and the way the Old Church has treated her during the short period of her existence.

CHAPTER IV.

“My kingdom,” says the Saviour, “is not of this world”—not of a worldly or temporal, but of a spiritual character. It is spiritual in its subjects, in its government, in its associations and pursuits—constituting the people of God “a peculiar people.” “Wherefore come out from the world, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and I will receive you.”

This does not imply secession, in form. Much less that we shall literally go out of the world; but simply that we shall have no intercourse with it, except for purposes of business, benevolence, and evangelization—nothing by way of mere sociability, or the cultivation of the world’s friendship, since this “is enmity with God.” So Christ,—“I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.” The idea is that we are to “have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.”

Here is where the Free Methodists have stood from the beginning. The one great object of their lives has been to *be* good, and *do* good. And for this they have been hated, and persecuted, and excommunicated where they belonged to the Old Church; until compelled to rally their forces, and go into a new church organization, and are now being spread abroad over the length and breadth of the land.

This people took their rise within the bounds of the Genesee Conference, where the hand of an over-ruling Providence had for some time been preparing the way.

Mr. Samuel K. J. Chesbrough, from whose account of the matter we shall quote somewhat largely, says: "The difficulties of the Genesee Conference had their origin some years ago, in the connection of several of its more prominent preachers with the Odd Fellows and Masons. Many of the old and tried members of the church remembered with horror the abduction and murder of Morgan; and they could not, in conscience, give their support to those ministers who were in sympathy and fellowship with the perpetrators of that atrocious deed. Some, who refused to receive the sacraments at the hands of these secret society ministers, or to contribute for their support, were, under various pretexts, cut off from the church.—Disunion followed.

"To check these evils, a pamphlet, taking strong ground against the connection of Methodist ministers with secret societies, written by Rev. C. D. Burlingham, was circulated in the Conference, at its session in 1848, by Rev. Eleazer Thomas. This pamphlet caused at once a great commotion. The secret society men were wonderfully excited. Some, now occupying prominent positions in the church, said, if they had to leave either, they would leave the church before 'they would leave the lodge.' The conservatives were greatly alarmed. They begged the offended brethren not to rend the church in pieces. The secret society men were appeased by a compromise resolution, which, as they construed it, conceded all they wished. They then learned a lesson which they have not been slow to profit by, that all they had to do to carry their points was, to stand together and assume a threatening attitude, and enough 'union savers' would rally to their support to give them a majority. Around this nucleus, gathered those whose religious sympathies and experience led them to place dependence upon worldly poli-

cy for the advancement of the interests of the church. At the ~~time~~ of those opposed to this secret society, worldly policy party, stood Rev. Eleazer Thomas. Around him rallied those who sympathized deeply with the doctrine of holiness, as taught by the standards of the church. After his transfer to California, the Lord raised up Revs. I. C. Kingsley, C. D. Burlingham, and L. Stiles, to lead on His hosts; the first was presiding Elder of Niagara District, the second of Olean, and the third of Genesee.—Camp-meetings, which had been revived, were kept up with increasing usefulness; Quarterly Meetings, especially those known as ‘General Quarterly Meetings,’ were attended with deep interest; and the work of full salvation went on with something of the primitive Methodist life and vitality.

“At the Conference held two years since at Medina, the secret-society men, now known as the Buffalo Regency, or regency party, to the number of some thirty, entered into a combination, threatening not to take work unless Kingsley and Stiles, who were very popular among the people—the latter especially—were removed from the cabinet. Being satisfied that one or both of them would be removed, they asked for a transfer to the Cincinnati Conference, which was, unhesitatingly, granted. In their places were appointed men subservient to the wishes of the regency party. The Presiding Elder of Genesee District, at one of the first Quarterly Meetings he held, entertained, put to vote, and allowed to pass, and to be published as ‘Quarterly Conference Proceedings,’ a preamble and resolutions, condemning persons of the opposite party in their absence, who were not responsible to that tribunal.

“At the Conference held in 1857 at Le Roy, an issue was made between the opposing parties, upon the election of the Secretary of the Conference. Rev. James Fuller

was elected over Rev. B. T. Roberts by some two or three majority.

"Revs. L. C. Kingsley and L. Stiles, at the request of a large number of preachers and people, were re-transferred to the Genesee Conference. This occasioned a Presiding Elder to say, '*If these men come back we are in for a seven years' war.*'

"The 'war' was soon commenced by presenting a bill of charges against Rev. B. T. Roberts, and two bills of charges against Rev. W. C. Kendall. That against the former was prosecuted, and voted sustained. Those against the latter were deferred for want of time, with the assurance that they would be prosecuted the next year.

"Kingsley, seeing how the battle was going, went back to the Cincinnati Conference. Notwithstanding these adverse influences, the cause of holiness advanced in the Conference more during this year than ever before. The camp-meetings held in Genesee and Niagara Districts, without the co-operation of the Presiding Elders, were the largest and most successful of any held for years in this region.

"The regency party seemed to grow more and more desperate, and for months before Conference, intimations were given out that those most prominent in getting up and sustaining these meetings must be expelled. In the expressive, though not very elegant language of a regency preacher, 'Naziritism,'—the name given to Methodism in earnest—'must be crushed out; and WE HAVE THE TOOLS TO DO IT WITH.'

"In the following pages you have an account of the means employed to carry this *holy* purpose into execution."

Here follows an account of the trial of Mr. Roberts, condensed somewhat, in regard to the testimony, from the

account given by Mr. Chesbrough, yet so as in no wise to change its import or bearing.

But we must premise, for the better understanding of the matter, that Mr. Roberts had previously been tried for publishing a certain article, entitled, "New School Methodism"—pronounced "guilty of immoral conduct," and then sent on to a charge! We shall give this article—since published in tract form—entire in the Appendix of this work, that the reader may see the ground of his condemnation.

And now for the trial:

CHARGES AND SPECIFICATIONS.

CHARGE.—*I hereby charge Benjamin T. Roberts with unchristian and immoral conduct.*

SPECIFICATIONS.

First.—Contumacy: In disregarding the admonition of this Conference, in its decision upon his case at its last session.

Second.—In republishing, or assisting in the republishing and circulation of a document, entitled, "New School Methodism," the original publication of which had been pronounced by the Conference unchristian and immoral conduct.

Third.—In publishing, or assisting in the publication and circulation of a document, printed in Brockport, and signed "George W. Estes," and appended to the one entitled "New School Methodism," and containing among other libels upon this Conference generally, and upon some of its members particularly, the following, to wit:

1. "For several years past there has been the annual sacrifice of a human victim at the Conference."
2. "No man is safe who dares even to whisper a word against this secret inquisition in our midst."

3. "Common crime can command its indulgence; bankruptcies and adulteries are venal offences; but opposition to its schemes and policies is a mortal sin—a crime without benefit of clergy."

4. That "The same fifty men who voted Bro. Roberts guilty of unchristian and immoral conduct, voted to re-admit a Brother for the service performed of kissing a young lady."

5. That "Bro. Roberts' trial was marked by gross iniquity of proceedings."

6. That "On the trial a right which any civil or military court would have allowed him, was denied."

7. That "A venerable Doctor of Divinity read the 'auto-da fe' sermon, wherein he consigned, in true inquisitorial style, Bro. Roberts' body and soul to hell."

8. That "This venerable D. D. is quite efficient in embarrassing effective preachers in their work, and pleading them to hell for the crime of preaching and writing the truth."

9. That "There is a clique among us, called the 'Buffalo Regency,' conspiring and acting in secret conclave, to kidnap, or drive away, or proscribe and destroy, by sham trials and starvation appointments, every one who has the boldness to question their supremacy in the Conference."

10. That "The fearless champions of true Methodism are being cloven down one after another in our sight."

11. That "The aforesaid members of this Conference are a monster power, which is writhing its slimy folds around the church of God and crushing out its life."

PERRY, Oct. 11, 1858.

(Signed,)

DAVID NICHOLS.

At the request of the complainant, Rev. James M. Fuller was appointed to assist in the prosecution; subsequently Rev. Thomas Carlton was added.

The defendant asked that he might be permitted to have as counsel a member of another Conference. Bishop Janes decided—Bishop Baker concurring—that he could not go out of the Conference for counsel. He then requested that Br. Ives might, with his own consent, be transferred to this Conference to assist defendant in this trial.

Bishop Janes decided that the right to make a transfer grew out of the right to make appointments. He could not, therefore, make a transfer for the purpose desired.

Rev. L. Stiles was finally appointed to assist in the defence.

The defendant offered, if the complaint would be withdrawn, and the action be removed to a civil court where an oath could be administered, and witnesses be compelled to testify, to give good security for the payment of all costs and damages that might be recovered against him. He requested that the offer might go upon the journal.—The offer was declined, and the request refused.

The defendant then asked that the venue might be changed to another Conference, and that he might be transferred to the Oneida Conference for this purpose.

In support of this request, Br. Roberts spoke in substance as follows :

“MR. PRESIDENT:—The request that I have made may be an unusual one, but I trust you will see that it is not unreasonable. I am entirely willing to meet everything that I have done, but I claim that I am entitled to a fair and impartial trial. It is a wise provision of the law of the land, that the ‘venue may be changed to another county, when the defendant conceives he cannot have a fair and impartial trial in the county where the venue is laid.’—Burrell’s Practice, p. 141 Such is the state of party feeling in this Conference, that a fair and impartial trial is entirely out of the question. It cannot be had.—

Men have ceased to act from the convictions of their own judgment; the voice of justice cannot be heard amid the clamor of partizan strife. The party opposed to me, by threatening to make disturbance, have obtained the control of four out of five of the Districts; this has given them a clear majority in the Conference. Questions are not decided according to their merits, but according to their party bearings. Their secret meetings keep them together; as the leader go, all go.

"Thus, during the trial at the last session, a motion made by a friend of mine was promptly voted down by the regency party. One of their leaders then renewed the motion, and said a few words to the effect that the motion was about the thing. No additional light was shed upon the question. The same men voted for it that, but a few moments before, raised their hands against it.— So, during the present session, upon the question of the admission into full connection of a brother who is supposed to belong to our side of the house, the vote was taken, and he was rejected by the usual majority. Before the Bishop had time to announce the decision, a brother obtained the floor and re-opened the discussion. Meanwhile the leaders of the regency came in, and said they should go for him; they brought forward no new facts or reasons, but up went all hands in his favor. We have seen so much of this, that we cannot forbear applying to them the words of Cowper:

"With pack-horse constancy they keep the road,
Crooked or straight,' o'er quags or thorny dells,
True to the jingling of their leader's bells."

"A matter of this magnitude should never be allowed to be settled according to the preponderance of this or that party. It is of more importance that justice should be done, than that precedents should be followed.

"I should not be at all surprised if this trial had already

been decided in the secret meetings of those who comprise a majority of the Conference. I know it will be denied; it has been repeatedly denied that my case was prejudged last year.

"Yet I have been recently told by a member of the regency party, that he had no idea that any charges would have been presented last year, had they not felt satisfied, from action taken in their secret meetings, that my condemnation would be secured. Sir, I am not willing to be tried by men who are capable of pursuing such a course. Their decision cannot command respect.

"I look upon this whole matter, last year and this, as a wanton persecution. It is deemed necessary to the success of the party to injure my standing, and cripple my influence to the fullest extent possible.

"I had nothing to do whatever with writing or publishing the pamphlet, signed G. W. Estes. It was written and published without my knowledge or consent. It contains some things that I never approved of. It went into circulation without my agency. Had I been in my grave, it would probably have been circulated more extensively than it has been. I am willing to bear my own sins, but I do not consent to be made a scape-goat to bear the sins of this Conference.

"Whoever I should be tried by, if at all, I certainly should not be by them. Everything indicates that an occasion is sought. It is time that a stop was put to these partisan prosecutions."

The Chair decided that a transfer for the purpose of trial could not be made. "The Discipline makes preachers responsible to the Conferences to which they belong."

The defendant then asked that he might be tried by a committee, according to the provision of the Discipline.—Part I., Ch. X., Sec. 2., p. 93.

He said, "Mr. President: Since I cannot be tried by

impartial and unprejudiced men, it seems to me that I have a right to ask to be tried by a committee, so small that each man composing it will feel a high degree of personal responsibility for the decision he may make. It is well known that men often do in a body what they would scorn to do as individuals. They hide themselves in each other's shadow. Socrates was wont to say, that though every man in Athens were a philosopher, an Athenian assembly would still be little better than a mob. In large bodies reason and judgment often give place to party zeal and prejudice. I would rather be tried by a committee composed entirely of men of the opposite side, than by the Conference in its present condition. I would be willing to leave it to the Presiding Elders, though all but one are opposed to us. I would have this trial go on now, in just as public a manner as though it were before the entire Conference.

"Another reason why this case should not go before the Conference is this: It is alleged that some members of this body are specially injured in their individual character by the publication complained of. They have, then, a deep personal interest in the issue of this trial. Though they do not appear in the complaint, yet they are, in reality, parties in the case.

"Now, Sir, it is, I believe, a well established principle, prevailing wherever the right of trial by jury prevails, that no one can sit as judge or juror in a case in which he is personally interested. It has been decided that if a positive statute should give this right, such enactment would be null and void.

"If the law say that a man shall be a judge in his own cause, such law being contrary to natural equity, shall be void, for "*jura naturae sunt immutabilia*.' They are '*leges legum*.' That is, 'natural rights' are immutable. 'They are the laws of laws.'—Hobart's Report, p. 87.

"This, Sir, is the equitable provision of the common law; and shall the plainest principles of justice be set aside in an ecclesiastical investigation? Here, if anywhere, we ought to look for the most perfect impartiality. Every precaution should be taken, that can be taken, to have the question settled according to its merits. But if the Conference decides it, it will be, I am satisfied, by a party vote. My request is certainly reasonable. If brethren wish me to have anything like a fair trial, they cannot refuse it."

James M. Fuller opposed letting the case go before a committee. He said a "committee would be as partisan as the Conference. Is it true that this body of professed ministers are so actuated by party zeal that a fair trial cannot be had?"

A. Kendall: "Can we do less than grant the request of Bro. Roberts? Nine or twelve old members would certainly give a more judicious and impartial verdict than the Conference, in the present state of party feeling."

Dr. Lucky: "I am in favor of having this case go to a committee. It should have gone to one in the first place. It never ought to have been brought here in its present form."

H. Ryan Smith: "You cannot find nine or fifteen men who will be willing to take the responsibility of deciding this case. They would feel crushed under it. I do not believe that a majority of this Conference can be brought to do wrong. Party lines are clearly drawn, yet I mean to do right."

T. Carlton: "Reference has been made to secret meetings, and the trial of last year. I did not attend a secret meeting at Le Roy. We had select meetings, but there were no votes taken to condemn Bro. Roberts. The vote was that Bro. Roberts should have a fair trial. Reflections have been made upon this Conference. The trial

should, therefore, be public, in this church. It should not go to a committee."

B. T. Roberts: "I have stated that I wanted the trial to be public; I do most earnestly. I should be unwilling to have it go to a committee, if it could not be just as public as though the entire Conference should vote upon the case. If it goes before a committee, they will feel bound to listen patiently to the testimony, and examine the case. If the Conference proceed to try it, many of the members will, I fear, do as some did last year, be absent while the testimony is being taken, but be on hand to vote, without having heard the evidence which should control their votes. I am sorry to hear it repeatedly said by brethren of the other side, that they had no secret meetings at Le Roy. What do they mean? How can they hazard such assertions? I will read the minutes of one of these meetings. They came into my hands providentially, in an honorable manner; but how, no one will know:

"LE ROY, Sept. 3d, 1857.

"Meeting convened, according to adjournment. Brother Parsons in the chair. Prayer by Bro. Fuller.

"Brethren present pledged themselves by rising, to keep to themselves the proceedings of this meeting.

"Moved, That we will not allow the character of B. T. Roberts to pass, until he has had a fair trial. Passed.

"Moved, That we will not pass the character of Rev. W. C. Kendall, until he has had a fair trial. Passed.

"Moved, That Bro. Carlton be added to the committee on Bro. Kendall's case. Passed."

"Thus, it seems that secret meetings were really held. This secret conclave assumed to act in a judicial manner upon the cases of absent brethren. The promise to give them a 'fair trial,' means the same as the promise of the Administration to give the people of Kansas a fair elec-

tion under Border Ruffian sway. What right had this conclave to say that any brother should have any trial at all? Their action rendered 'a fair trial, impossible. Thus you see I have good reasons for not wishing to be tried by these men. Give me a committee."

Dr. Luckey: "I think the case should by all means go to a committee."

The defendant then entered the following objections:

"I object to any member of this Conference sitting upon this trial as a juror, who feels himself *personally*, in his individual character, libelled by the article complained of. I also object to any person sitting upon the trial as juror, who has taken any action, or participated in any action upon this case, in any secret or public meeting, or who has expressed his opinion in regard to the merits of the case."

Decision of Bishop Janes: "Bro. Roberts has requested the Chair to exclude from the Conference, during the trial, those members who claim to be specially and individually libelled in the article complained of in the specifications. Our answer is, The Chair does not organize or appoint this court. The Discipline appoints it. And whatever may be our convictions in the case, we judge we have no authority to say that any member of the Conference shall not sit or vote."

Accordingly, the accused being denied the right of choice of counsel, of change of venue, and of challenge for cause—a right secured to the defendant in all criminal courts, whether civil or ecclesiastical, as well as by legal guarantees, as by the law of usage, among civilized nations—was brought before the Conference and the trial proceeded.

In looking over the bill of charges and specifications preferred against Mr. Roberts, (as seen above,) it will ap-

pear that the charges, or charge rather, turned wholly upon one single specification—"the re-publishing and circulation of 'New School Methodism,' with a certain other document appended,"—and that this specification also turned upon a single witness, contradicted and impeached at that. The witness referred to was the Rev. John Bowman, and here is his testimony:

Rev. John Bowman called, and said: "I have seen this document entitled 'New School Methodism,' and 'to whom it may concern,' signed George W. Estes, before. I first saw it in the cars, between Medina and Lockport. Bro. Roberts presented it to me; several were presented in a package; there were, I think, three dozen. Bro. Roberts desired me to leave a portion of them with Bro. Cox, or Bro. Williams, of Medina, provided I fell in company with them. I put a question to him whether they were to be distributed gratuitously, or sold. He said he would like to get enough to defray the expense of printing, but circulate them any how. He desired me not to make it known that he had any agency in the matter of circulating the document, if I could consistently keep it to myself. I do not know that anything more was said about the payment of printing them; my recollections is not very distinct. He mentioned he had been at considerable expense."

Mr. George W. Estes called, and testified as follows:—"Bro. Roberts had nothing to do with publishing, or assisting in publishing, the document under consideration, to my knowledge, and I claim to know. He had nothing to do with the writing of the part that bears my name; I do not know that he had any knowledge that its publication was intended. He never gave his consent that the part, entitled 'New School Methodism,' should be republished by me, or any one else, to my knowledge. He was never responsible for its publication, in whole or in part.

He never contributed anything to the expense of its publication. I never sold any to him; I never forwarded him any; I never gave orders to any one to forward Br. Roberts any, to my knowledge. I alone am responsible for its publication."

Now, supposing these two witnesses—one for, and the other against, Mr. Roberts—were equally credible, the testimony of Mr. Bowman would be completely neutralized by that of Mr. Estes; the effect of which must be the vindication of Mr. Roberts from the slightest imputation from guilt. But we are not quite done with the case. It remains to bring out the triumphant impeachment of Mr. Bowman's character for truth and veracity, showing that *his* testimony, even though uncontradicted, goes for absolutely nothing. The subject of impeachment has respect to what he said upon the floor of Conference in 1857, concerning the Rev. L. C. Kingsley:

Rev. J. Bowman called:

"Ques. Do you remember making a speech on the Conference floor in favor of Bro. Kingsley?"

"Ans. I stated that he was not entirely destitute of some things that might be praiseworthy.

"Ques. Did any one come out of Conference and say, You must take back what you said in his favor, or you would rue it? Was any threat made to you?"

"Ans. I cannot say there was.

"Rev. Wm. Barrett called, and said: 'Bro. Bowman said he had been threatened if he did not take back what he had said in favor of Kingsley on the Conference floor.'

"Rev. R. E. Thomas called: 'Bro. Bowman told me at the Medina Conference, that a member of the Conference said to him, if he did not take back what he had said in reference to Bro. Kingsley on the Conference floor, he would rue it.'

"Revs. S. C. Church and Furman testified the same."

But in the following letter of this same John Bowman, we will let him cut his own throat, that the action of the Genesee Conference in the expulsion of Rev. B. T. Roberts from the Methodist Episcopal Church may be seen to have been based upon the testimony of a dead man!

MEDINA, April 23, 1857.

"DEAR BRO.—It is evident there was a certain *clique* formed prior to our last Conference, for the purpose of effecting a change in the cabinet. But I was not invited to attend any of the meetings till during the session of the Conference. It was said that that meeting was a peace measure, and the names of W——, D——, and F——, were to be presented to the Bishop as suitable persons for the office of Presiding Elders. In a thoughtless moment I put my name to the paper. That fatal transaction, I have reason to regard as the great mistake of my life.—

* * * The case of Bro. K—— came up in Conference, and I felt myself called upon to repel some of the vituperations which were thrust against him. After this I was frequently notified that I must, in open Conference, take back all that I had said for Bro. K——, or I must forever be proscribed. These threats settled me, and I *remain* settled. A certain minister who has been stationed in Medina more than three years, approached me soon after Conference closed, and said, 'You have kindled a fire about your ears which will not be easily extinguished.'

"J. BOWMAN."

And now what shall we say? The Genesee Conference have condemned Mr. Roberts, and expelled him from the church, upon the above showing of his case, for "*immoral conduct*." But will he stand condemned on these grounds at the bar of public opinion? Doubtless, a verdict of "*not guilty*" will be rendered by the community; and would have been by the Genesee Conference, had they not had other ends to serve than those of justice and truth.

CHAPTER V.

THE testimony being closed, the Rev. Mr. Stiles, counsel for the defence, made the following very able plea :

PLEA OF REV. L. STILES.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Indisposed as I find myself at this time by reason of a severe cold, and hence disqualified as I feel myself to speak on this occasion, it is exceedingly fortunate for Bro. Roberts that such is the nature of the case before us, soon to be submitted to the action of this Conference, that he needs but little of my help. Could we all be dispossessed of prejudice, arising from the unfortunate condition into which we are plunged by reason of the party issues that now so unhappily divide us ;— could we be turned back in the history of our Conference but a few brief years ; could we see as we then saw, feel as we then felt, and act as we then acted, we should be now ready, with the testimony before us as we now have it, notwithstanding the lengthy speech of the counsel for the prosecution, in which he has twice gone over the whole ground of the matters of complaint, to submit the case to the action of the Conference without a single word of defence on our part. In so doing there could not be a single doubt as to the result. In the unprejudiced judgment of this Conference Bro. Roberts would be immediately, fully, and justly acquitted of the charge alleged against him.

I confess myself not a little surprised that a charge of this character should be brought against the defendant ; that anything of this kind should be introduced to further

distract and divide our Conference. True, I had heard months ago repeated expressions of a predetermination to expel several of the leading members of this body. It has been iterated and reiterated through the Conference that this thing *must* and *would* be done at this Conference, and that Bro. Roberts was one of the number thus preordained to be expelled. But such seemed to me to be the madness of this enterprise, that I could not believe it would be entered upon. But it seems we have misjudged either the heads or the hearts of these men. And now, as we are put upon our defence under these circumstances, we wish it distinctly understood that as our case is not one that calls for the exercise of merey, we ask none at the hands of the Conference. If worthy of death, we refuse not to die. It was said by the Counsel of the prosecution in his opening plea with reference to the action of this Conference in the case of Bro. Roberts last year, that "he was allowed to remain in the Conference by the exercise of the extreme of mercy." This we positively deny. He asked no merey last year, he only asked for justice, which was not granted; and all he asks at this time is simply justice, which if granted will result in his full acquittal.

We fully accord with the sentiment expressed by the counsel for the prosecution, that "important interests are pending upon the issues of this trial; that they will materially affect the people, and the harmony of our Zion." This is unquestionably true, and doubtless, in a far greater degree than we now apprehend! Such is the nature of this prosecution, and the influences which have induced it, that let it result either in acquittal or condemnation, it will most certainly "affect the people and the harmony of our Zion." It is well for us to keep this in mind. The people understand these matters; they will see, and judge, and act in reference to them. We must remember that this case is to go before the tribunal of the people, after

it is passed upon by this Conference. We now come to remark directly upon the charge, specifications and items. The charge is: "*Unchristian, immoral conduct.*" A very grave charge, indeed! Of the highest grade known in our ecclesiastical courts. This fact constituted the basis of our exception to the prosecution of this charge. There is evidently a *design* in the manner in which this bill is framed. The defence is charged with "immoral conduct," the highest grade of crime known in our ecclesiastical courts. Had he been guilty of theft, adultery, or murder, the charge would have been the same. But the specifications, if proved to be true, look to offences of a very different grade, bearing no likeness as to moral turpitude to the grade mentioned in the charge. This method of proceeding is most unjust, and calculated to reflect unfairly and unjustly upon the defence, whether acquitted or condemned. Last year the same method was adopted to prejudice and damage the character of the defendant. He was pronounced guilty of *immoral conduct* for the *crime* of writing and publishing an article, all of which he offered to prove true, but was barred of the privilege. And then he was heralded through the land, through the columns of the *Buffalo Advocate*, as guilty of "immoral conduct." None can be in doubt as to the *design* of framing this bill thus.

The first specification under this grave charge is "contumacy," in disregarding the admonition of this Conference in its decision upon his case at its last session.

We have good reasons to believe that the defendant did not regard himself as acting contumaciously in the action objected to by the prosecution. He did not, and others did not, understand the vote of the Conference of last year to require him to pursue a course different from what he has taken, or, as the wording of the Minutes seem to have it, "pursue a better course in the future." Or, if

contumacy be, as defined by the prosecuting counsel, "stubbornness, with reference to submission to proper order or authority," it is yet to be shown that defendant has manifested such stubbornness; and it is yet to be shown that he has not "pursued a better course." But, suppose it to be granted that he was contumacious in refusing to submit to the admonition of the Conference, is this "immoral conduct"? Is this a crime of the highest grade known in the calendar of crimes? Can we in justice vote this brother guilty of "immoral conduct," for the offence alleged in this specification? Most certainly we cannot do this, and be guiltless ourselves.

SECOND SPECIFICATION.—"In republishing, or assisting in the republication and circulation of, a document entitled 'New School Methodism,' the original publication of which had been pronounced by this Conference, unchristian and immoral conduct."

As we understand it, both the publication and circulation must be proved, to sustain the specification. Nothing is made out, unless both are proved. Suppose it were proved that defendant published any given number of said documents, and it could not be proved that any number of them ever went into circulation; or suppose it to be proved that none of them were ever circulated, what culpability could attach to the mere act of publication?—Now, as defendant is charged with both publication *and* circulation, both must be proved, or the case fails. But both are not proved; so far from this, we have proved most positively, that Bro. Roberts had nothing whatever to do with the publication of the Estes pamphlet, or the republication of his article of last year. The author of said publications has here testified that he alone was responsible for said publications; that Mr. Roberts never in any way, to his knowledge, contributed a single cent for the publishing of said articles. We have evidence that

Mr. Roberts did not even know of the intention to publish said articles. Thus, we see, while the charge in the one limb of this specification proves groundless, the other goes by default.

Then, too, the evidence as to circulation is quite inadequate to substantiate the specification. It rests alone on the testimony of one man; and the conversation alleged to be had with reference to them was in the cars, under circumstances not the most favorable to ascertaining the truth in the case. He testifies that defendant put three dozen of these fly-sheets into his hands, and requested him to hand them to one or two other persons. Suppose we admit this to be true, and that it is precisely as he states it to be, still it is not yet proved that a single copy of these thirty-six ever went into circulation, except such as were circulated by said witness. No evidence appears whatever, that at any other time, or under any other circumstances, defendant ever circulated a single copy of the fly-sheets. A local preacher, on his charge of the past year, with whom he has been very intimate, testifies that he never saw one of said sheets, till he was on his way to this Conference, which is proof presumptive that he did not circulate them, or he would have been quite likely to have conveyed one to the hands of this intimate friend and local preacher.

Let it be distinctly marked, then, that all the evidence of circulation that has been adduced in the course of this long investigation, rests upon the evidence of this one single witness, under the circumstances above named.

Let it be marked, also, that whatever of criminality there may be in the act of circulating, many others are in the same condemnation, and equally guilty, if not more so. While the prosecution has failed to prove that a single copy ever went into circulation by the agency of Bro. Roberts, we have proved positively that others, who

are in opposition to Bro. Roberts, have purchased and circulated numbers of them. Bro. Hopkins has testified that he has purchased two dozen of them, and that, too, we suppose, for the express purpose of circulation. Probably, half or more of the members of this Conference are guilty of the very thing alleged against Bro. Roberts in this specification. This being the case, we would ask, Why this distinction? Why seize upon one man out of seventy-five, or more, who are equally guilty? Why make him the scape-goat to bear away the crimes of a whole Conference?

The answer is, it has been predetermined that this one man must go out of the Conference; and, while all others who are equally guilty are held as guiltless, he must be seized upon as the Conference victim. Then, we ask again, Is Bro. Roberts guilty of "immoral conduct?" If so, then we have seventy-five others, all members of this Conference, guilty of "immoral conduct!" A strange state of affairs, indeed! Half of the Genesee Conference guilty of "immoral conduct;"—charges, however, for the very same offense, presented against only *one* of this number!

THIRD SPECIFICATION.—"In publishing, or assisting in the publication and circulation of a document printed in Brockport, and signed Geo. W. Estes, and appended to the one entitled New School Methodism, and containing, among other libels upon this Conference generally, and upon some of its members particularly, the following, to wit:"

Under this specification we find a bill of items, of things written in the Estes pamphlet, which Bro. Roberts is charged with circulating and publishing, or assisting in so doing. The proof is yet wanting.

This specification charges libel upon the defendant in saying things included in this bill of items.

Before entering upon the investigation of these items, we wish to repudiate the false assumption of the prosecuting counsel, that we endorse, as a whole, the assertions of these items, or the document from which they are taken; or that we do, by any inference or implication, acknowledge the authorship, or confess to the charge of publication or circulation, simply because we enter upon our defense in a legal and legitimate way. By what strange reasoning does the counsel leap to such a forced conclusion as this? Who ever heard of its parallel in any civil or ecclesiastical court before this day? This is a mere assumption of the counsel, utterly without foundation, warrant, or justification; a subterfuge, as we shall see, to *serve an end, and to compass a purpose.**

Here we wish to say distinctly, that we do not now and never have endorsed *all* the sentiments of the Estes pamphlet, from which these items are taken. Bro. Roberts does not endorse, in the literal sense, *all* that is said in these items. When I received that proof-sheet, I read it till I came to paragraphs which I did not believe to be

*According to this reasoning the defendant must confess to the criminality of the charge, or the court must presume him to be guilty by reason of his presuming to enter upon his defense. This is very like the test of ancient witchcraft, where the suspected subject was proved to be guilty, if he presumed to make for the shore when thrown into the water.

The prosecution were obliged to assume this ridiculous position, from the fact of having utterly failed, as all must see, to either fix the authorship of the pamphlet in question upon the defendant, or to prove that he has aided in the publication or circulation of the same. It is important to keep in mind this ridiculous position of the prosecution, from the fact that upon this most senseless subterfuge, the defendant was finally condemned and expelled from the Conference and the Church, on the charge of "unchristian and immoral conduct!"

Either this must be confessed, or else an attitude equally uncomplimentary to the head or heart of the prosecution, and one not less farcical and sham-like, is forced upon them, viz: That of convicting the defendant of "unchristian and immoral conduct," and of expelling him from the Conference and the M. E. Church for the act (if such testimony as was presented were allowed to be valid) of putting a three-dozen package of fly-sheets into the hands of a neighboring preacher, with the request that he hand them to the third person. And this, too, when perhaps one-half of the members of the Conference were equally guilty.

literally true, sentiments which I thought better never be uttered, reflections upon the Bishops which I believe unjust; and, hence, I put said proof-sheet within the envelope, and refused to read it through. But there *are* sentiments uttered in these items, which we believe to be both strictly true and important, and our object in entering upon a defense of these truths will be most apparent before we conclude our remarks.

The first item says: "For several years past, there has been the annual sacrifice of a human victim at the Conference."

To know whether the declaration of this item is true, we should understand what was in the mind of the author. What is to be understood by the term "*sacrificed*"? No one believes this declaration true in a strictly literal sense. We do not, of course, suppose the author of this pamphlet meant to say that a "human victim" was literally annually immolated and beheaded. The absurdity of such an idea is only equalled by the view taken of this expression by the prosecution. They seem to have nothing else in mind but a *money* sacrifice. *Money, money*, seems to be the commodity of paramount importance, in their eyes.—Several hours have been spent by them in the examination of witnesses, to prove that men have not been sacrificed in a money point of view. It is concluded that one man who was deemed sacrificed, in the sense of the author of the sheet, was not sacrificed, because, forsooth, it is proved that his salary at the time under question, was a "thousand dollars a year, and his house-rent." Character, reputation, ministerial standing, and Christian influence are all left out of the question by the prosecution! These are of no account; they are passed by unnoticed. The only question of importance to them seems to be, "Did you sustain a loss of dollars and cents?"

Now, we hold that this is a very mean, low view of the

question—a view, probably, which never entered the mind of the author of this item, and would only be entertained by a lover of Mammon. If, for adherence to the truth, I were turned out to beg from door to door, or to saw wood for my daily bread, I would scorn the idea of talking about being sacrificed, in a mere money point of view.—In the sense designed by the author of the item, we have proved conclusively that men have been sacrificed. In a very important sense, the ministerial reputation and standing, and the Christian influence of certain men in this Conference, have been sacrificed by a secret combination of certain other men in this Conference, instituted to crush them out, and drive them from the Conference.—Here, then, in this item, is no libel, for what is said is strictly true, in the sense doubtless designed by its author.

Are we then prepared, as a Conference, to vote a man guilty of “immoral, unchristian conduct,” for the act of circulating such a truth as this? Who dare raise his hand to pronounce the act “immoral conduct?”

The second item of this specification, importing libel to the defendant, is the following, viz.: “No man is safe, who dares even whisper a word against this secret Inquisition in our midst.”

Here, again, we have to remark that the sense of the author of the item should be sought for.

Much time has been spent by the prosecution, in the examination of witnesses, to prove that there is not really a literal “Inquisition” in our Conference. Well, who ever dreamed there was? Who ever supposed we had the literal thing among us? None of us have ever supposed that in any dark corner of our Conference, we had, under bar and bolt, enclosed by walls, the literal dungeon, fire, fagot, rack, thumbscrews, and gridirons. Nothing of this kind was in the mind of the author. But that there is something in our midst that bears a strong and sharp

likeness, image, and superscription to the spirit of the Inquisition, who will presume to deny, after all we have seen in the progress of this trial? When we see what we have here—a Presiding Elder going around with his little common-place book, picking up the little confidential whisperings, uttered in social chit-chat, and bringing them up to this Conference, and presenting them as bars to the admission of a young man to our Conference—who, we say, in view of this and many other things of a like nature we have been called to witness, will say the author was not justifiable in the utterance of the sentiment of the item? Who, indeed, will feel himself safe hereafter in “whispering a word against this secret Inquisition?” Who, in looking at what we believe to be the meaning of this item, can vote B. T. Roberts guilty of “unchristian and immoral conduct,” from the proof adduced of circulating this pamphlet? This cannot be done in righteousness or in justice.

The third item is that with reference to “bankruptcies and adulteries,” being “venal offences” in the eyes of these men of the “secret Inquisition.”

As we have already announced that we did not endorse all the language of all these items, and have not designed to attempt to prove or justify each and every sentence and sentiment contained therein, we will remark only upon that clause upon which testimony has been brought to bear.

As to the charge of bankruptcy, the case upon which testimony has been adduced, we regard as proof sufficient to show that there was, at least, some very plausible grounds upon which to base the assertion, and justify the charge. True, a certificate has been produced, showing that a disciplinary investigation was had in the case; but we have evidence to show that at least three of the injured creditors knew nothing about said investigation; that, al-

though two of them were prominent citizens of the village of Lima, where the investigation was had, these men were wholly ignorant of its occurrence. Here is a strange feature in the case! Does it not, we would ask, at least look in the direction of *fraudulent* bankruptcy? Then, too, the unwillingness that has been shown by members of this Conference to have this matter looked into, is, to say the least, a very shabby compliment to the integrity and intentions of the parties concerned. As will be remembered, letters were presented at the Medina Conference, purporting to convey important information, concerning the character of the bankruptcy of Rev. Wm. H. De P. These letters were from the hands of injured parties, who desired redress, if redress could be had. The request was made that these letters be referred to a committee, that should be appointed by the Conference, to examine their contents, with the express understanding, that if the grounds of complaint which they set forth were unworthy of Conference action, that they be permitted to slumber in the hands of the committee. But, strange to say, this impartial effort to secure an honorable investigation of this bankruptcy was treated with neglect, the committee was refused, and the matter passed by in comparative silence. With these facts before us, we are quite willing to leave every unprejudiced mind to find how much and how good grounds there are for the charge of the item under consideration.

Item fourth says: "The same fifty men who voted Bro. Roberts guilty of 'unchristian and immoral conduct,' for writing the above article, voted to re-admit a brother from the regions round about Buffalo, for the service performed of kissing a young lady, in the vestibule of the Conference room, during the progress of Bro. Roberts' trial. 'Nero fiddled while the martyrs burned.'"

About all we have to say with reference to this item is,

we suppose it to be highly figurative, and from respect to the feeling of the person implicated as having kissed the girl, for the consideration named in this item, we pass it by with but few remarks. Whether admission to this Conference was really the *bona fide* consideration for the service performed, I have no special means of knowing, and, hence, have no disposition to making any further remarks on the subject.

The fifth item reads thus: "Bro. Roberts' trial, if it deserves the name of a trial, was marked by gross iniquity of proceedings."

The grounds of this charge we suppose to be based, not so much upon the mere acts of the trial, in the court-room, as upon the outside connections of the trial, in their bearings on the actions in the court-room.

To avoid the force of the truth of this item, the prosecuting counsel has gravely told us that, "We have nothing to do with what took place out of the court-room.—We have only to do with the actual acts of the trial."*—Could this position be granted, it would certainly be a very cheap way of disposing of, to the prosecution, a very unpleasant difficulty. But we doubt not that every unbiased mind will decide that outside influences have very much to do with the integrity of the acts in the court-room. Suppose an empaneled jury, prior to taking their places in the jury-box, to enter a private room, and by themselves alone there discuss in any way the merits of an important criminal case, soon to be brought before them for decision. Suppose them there to take *test* votes bearing upon the case, and then to express in any way their opinions relative to the guilt or innocence of the criminal. What, we would ask, would be said of such a jury? We all know that the world would justly brand

*See note on page 69.

them with infamy. They would well deserve the contempt and scorn of every honest man, and would go out to the world marked with perfidy, dark as that which stained the Harden County Jury.

But what less than this criminality do we see in the action pertaining to the trial of Rev. B. T. Roberts at the Le Roy Conference? Mark the parallel! Here we see a body of Methodist Ministers who are to act as jurors in the trial of a brother preacher, going by themselves into a private room, holding a secret meeting, to all intents and purposes, pledging themselves together, to "*keep to themselves the proceedings of the meeting.*" Then after discussion had in the case, taking *test* votes bearing upon the case, and after pledging to proceed against Bro. Roberts, then we see them coming into the court-room and acting in perfect accordance with the votes taken in the secret meeting. Now, when we look at what we here see, these men acting in a sacredly pledged secret meeting, held in a private room over Bryant and Clark's store in Le Roy, there pre-judging and pre-enacting in the case of Bro. Roberts, and then coming into the court-room in the M. E. Church and acting as they did then and there act, with such perfect unanimity that in voting on the specifications and the charge, there was hardly the variation among them of a hand, more or less, that went up on each and every specification and the charge. When we connect, we say, the transactions of these two rooms and these two meetings, and compare the harmony of action in both cases, we would ask, how dissimilar are these transactions to those of the perjured jurors, to whom reference has been made for illustration? And we would ask, with how good a grace does the prosecuting counsel say, "We have nothing to do with what took place out of the court-room"? And again we would ask, and claim an answer at the lips of every honest man, was not "Bro. Roberts' trial marked

by gross iniquity of proceedings"? And for saying this, in view of the circumstances we have brought to view in the case, should any one be charged with either unchristian or immoral conduct? Most certainly not.

The sixth and seventh items are withdrawn, for reasons we suppose well understood by the prosecution.

The eighth item says of a certain "venerable D. D.," that "Though nominally superannuated, &c., he is nevertheless quite efficient in embarrassing effective preachers in their work and pleading them to hell for the crime of preaching and writing the truth."

I suppose the author of this item fixed his mind upon facts which have transpired in this Conference, and then said just what he believed to be true.

It is a well-known fact that this "venerable D. D." has been quite efficient in embarrassing effective preachers in their work.

Three successive Conferences, at least, preceding the present, have borne witness to the fact that this "venerable D. D." has been chief agent in "Bills of Information" and "Bills of Charges" against effective preachers, and as this author says, so doubtless he believed, for "preaching and writing the truth." Certainly it can be no small embarrassment in the way of effective men of the Conference, to have an annual "Bill of Charges" brought against them by this "venerable D. D.," whatever may be the result of the investigation; and certainly these men against whom charges have been brought, have been "effective men," men whose labors have been greatly blessed of the Lord; men whose labors have year after year been followed by extensive revivals of religion; and that this "venerable D. D." did plead Bro. Roberts to hell, at the Le Roy Conference, in the paper he read on the Conference floor, will not be doubted by any who remember the import of that remarkable document.

The ninth item reads thus: "There is a clique among us called the 'Buffalo Regency,' conspiring and acting in secret conclave to kidnap or drive away, or proscribe and destroy by sham trials and starvation appointments, every one who has the boldness to question their supremacy in the Conference."

That there is a "clique among us called the 'Buffalo Regency,'" none, I think, will ever hereafter be able to deny.

It seems myself had the honor of publicly christening this secret clique. I was not aware that in a little speech on the Olean Conference floor I was doing so notable an act. I had frequently heard this name given to this clique on various occasions, but never dreamed that I was to have the distinguished honor of first pronouncing in public the name of "Buffalo Regency."

I concede, however, that it is clearly proven; for the prosecution have called on witness after witness to prove that they first heard the name spoken by myself on the floor of the Olean Conference.

We will here rest the important question as to the public baptism of this secret clique called the "Buffalo Regency." The name is conceded. Now, that we have the veritable thing for the design specified in the item, we have clearly shown by many witnesses.

The efforts made by the prosecution to prove there is not an actual organization claiming this name, are all utterly void of force and importance. We have never believed and never asserted that this clique had an actual constitution and by-laws, and that in due form they held their annual election for officers, and were surrounded by all the paraphernalia of a regularly organized secret society, as in the case of Odd Fellows or Masons. But what we contend for, and what we have proved, is that this clique actually do act as a secret society. And while they have not the constitution and by-laws, they have the

veritable thing. We have shown that this clique have held regular secret meetings; as strictly secret and private as any meetings ever known as secret meetings.

We have shown that at one of those meetings, at least, a door-keeper was employed to guard the room and prevent the entrance of all who could not be trusted. And it is a notable fact that this witness in his unwillingness to tell the facts in the case, has testified to the strange circumstance that he "*Stood outside of all the Churches in Medina.*" This testimony, strange as it is, is not without its significancy, which we shall do well to remember.

So secret were those meetings that even a brother preacher from a neighboring Conference could not be trusted.— And after due private deliberation as to how to get rid of the unwelcome guest, a member of the secret clique went to said brother and duly informed him that that was a secret meeting, and he was invited to leave the room.— There was, as we have shown, not only a general understanding among the members of this clique, that these meetings were to be secret, but we see them taking the precaution, lest in some way these proceedings should leak out, to "pledge themselves to keep to themselves the proceedings of the meeting." No further proof, then, is necessary, that this Regency Clique is a *secret* clique.

In the extreme desire of the prosecution to avoid the culpability consequent upon the proof adduced of the nature of these secret meetings, they have resorted to a characteristic dodge, which reminds us very forcibly of an adage of Dr. Bond, viz.: "*He that is only law honest is a very great rogue.*"

Witnesses have been asked, "If they were in any *secret* meetings held in Le Roy during the session of our Conference there?" They have answered in the negative.— When other facts were to be elicited, these witnesses have been asked, "Were you in a *select* meeting held over Bry-

ant and Clark's store in Le Roy, during the session of our Conference there?" and they have answered in the affirmative. Is it not passing strange that Methodist Ministers should stoop so low as to resort to such trickery and deception as this to avoid the force of truth? These men have solemnly testified here, with all due gravity, that they positively were not in any *secret* meetings, but that they were in *select* meetings at the time under consideration, and we have adduced evidence to show that these meetings bore all the essential characteristics and attributes of strictly secret meetings. Yet they were not *secret*, only *select* meetings! Here surely is a distinction without a difference.

After the close of the Le Roy Conference, on my way to the depot, I exchanged a few words with a brother on the subject of the secret meetings, which I supposed had been held during the session of our Conference. To my utter astonishment this brother positively denied that the Regency men had had a single *secret* meeting during the session of that Conference. Not an hour after that, before I had passed ten miles from Buffalo, a brother minister told me in the cars that he had during the session of our Conference been in a *secret* meeting of those men.—This brother when invited in was supposed to be in sympathy with them. As I supposed both of these brethren to be men of unquestionable veracity, I was wholly unable to reconcile these antagonistic statements. But during the progress of this trial the mystery is all solved.—These were not *secret*, but only *select* meetings.

The business transactions of these meetings, present, according to the testimony of those who were in there, a strange mongrel of the social and religious aspect. Evidence goes to show that the business of these meetings was transacted in a business-like manner. There was a Chairman who presided over their deliberations, and there

was the Secretary who kept a record of the proceedings of the meeting. We have exhibited before this Conference the minutes of one of these meetings, which shows that motions were duly made, put, passed and recorded. Evidence shows that as to the business of these meetings, there was passing upon the character of preachers, praying, eating peaches, talking upon the subject of holiness, discussion of disciplinary questions, signing petitions or remonstrances against preachers who were obnoxious to them, &c., &c.

All this was done, you will observe, in a business-like and very pious manner. True, those of us who are uninitiated, cannot comprehend fully why a Chairman and Secretary should be necessary in a meeting for talking on the subject of holiness, or of prayers, or why these meetings should be held within closed doors, or why minutes of the same should be kept, or why a brother minister should be invited out of a meeting held for so good a purpose, or why a door-keeper should be necessary; and yet such is the evidence in the case.

The proof then, of the assertion of this item, that these men did "act in secret conclave," is past all doubt. That a part of their business was to take measure to "drive away" those who had the "boldness to question their supremacy in Conference," I think is quite as evident; and that this "driving away process" was to be pursued in part, at least, by "sham trials" is most evident, as evinced especially in the trial of Bro. Roberts of last year.

We are fully justified in calling the proceedings of these trials "sham trials." First, from the fact that these trials are prejudged and predetermined, as our evidence shows. It has been understood for months past that this trial was to take place at this Conference. Expressions to this effect have here and there leaked out and come to our ears. It has been said that these men, who are op-

posed to this secret clique that we have so fully exposed, *must* and *would* be put out of the Conference at this session, and Bro. Roberts has been named as one of the persons who *must* be thus sacrificed according to the pre-determination and dictation of this secret clique.

One of these leading men of this secret clique said, prior to Bro. Roberts' trial last year, "*Those men must be sacrificed, and they will be ; I know the minds of the leading men in this Conference on this point, and also of the Bishops.*"

In justice to our bench of Bishops, I here take pleasure in saying that these reflections upon their integrity we brand as grossly unjust and calumnious. We do not now, and we never have believed that these men ever had any good reason to say that they "knew the minds of the Bishops on this subject." We never have believed that the Bishops ever designed to show any party partiality towards either of the party sections of our Conference.—If we had no other evidence of the impartiality of the Bishops in our Conference issues, I think that the total absence of the slightest appearance of favoritism during the progress of this perplexing and laborious trial, should be sufficient to disabuse any candid mind of so unfounded a suspicion. And yet this talk is no new thing to us. This is not the first time that we have heard from the same quarters, by the same class of men, that the Bishops were committed to the favor of the Regency party, and against the Nazarites. These things have been stated to the laity for party purposes and to serve personal ends. We regard, as we always have, these declarations as unjust in their reflections upon the Bishops, as they are void of truth. We repudiate such statements as slanders upon the Episcopacy, which, as far as they are believed, are calculated to do them great injustice.

But to return to the culpability on the part of the pros-

ecution of prejudging and predetermining this case: Bro. Roberts was named by this man, who made the remark we have quoted, as one of the men who "must be sacrificed." One of these leading men said in a private family only a few miles distant from this place, on his way to this Conference, "some of these men must be put out of the Conference at this session, and we have the *tools* to do it with."

In yonder Chapel, but a few hours since, it was said by one of these secret clique men, "one of these parties must be driven to the wall at this Conference." Witnesses have testified that men of that secret clique party have told them during the year, that two or three of the leading men of the so-called Nazarite party were to be expelled at this Conference.

To break the force of our witness on this point as to "sham trials," the prosecution has asked a witness "If one of these expressions was not uttered during a conversation on the evils of Naziritism." Here again we find the "dog Noble" barking away at the empty hole of Naziritism, where he has been barking for the past three years. We have shown that there is not the slightest evidence that any such a society ever existed. Bro. J. McCreary has here testified, and as he did also three years ago at the Olean Conference, that he alone was responsible for whatever had been written indicating that such a society ever existed. Such has been the understanding ever since, and yet the empty hole is again assailed by the barking "dog Noble." From the fact of the persistent determination of these men to insist upon the existence of a Nazarite party, a few of us who considered ourselves misrepresented at the Le Roy Conference, published a disclaimer, setting this matter in its true light, which you will find in the testimony of Rev. J. P. Kent.

But, suppose we admit that these remarks were made

during a conversation on the "evils of Nazaritism," what then?

We deny positively, that any such evils exist among those who are called Nazarites, as are charged upon them. We know positively that the charges of excess and extravagance in religious devotions, imputed to them, are absolutely and grossly false and slanderous, and that they have not the slightest foundation in truth; and we doubt not these reflections upon them are made for party purpose and effect. Talk about the *evils* of Nazaritism! Sir, the time has come among us, when evil is put for good, and good for evil; bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter; light for darkness, and darkness for light.

The question was asked a witness: "Was not the opinion based on the fact, if they continued to pursue this irregular course, they were to be put out of Conference?" What palliation of the iniquity of prejudging these men, and predetermining to expel them from the Conference, is this, we would wish to know, even if this should prove to be true, which was not so proved! This only shows that these men assume to say what is regular, and what is irregular. It has come to that, that a few men assume to be the self-constituted regulators of the Conference; but it so happens that we question their claims in this matter. What they call regular, in some matters, we call very irregular; and what they call irregular, we call regular.—This Conference has been so long *regulated* by these irregular men, as we hold them, that things are found to be in a very *irregular* condition among us.

We call these trials "sham trials" again, from the fact of their having been virtually decided, as we have clearly and fully shown, by the jurors, prior to their coming into the court-room. We will not detain the Conference to detail these revolting circumstances again. These test-votes, and these secret pre-enactments, are before you. The at-

tempt, by the prosecution, to avoid the inevitable rebuke and condemnation that must fall upon the perpetrators of these deeds of secret injustice, which we have brought to light by prying open the doors of the secret conclaves, by saying that they "voted that the character of B. T. Roberts should not pass till he had a *fair trial*," is another baseless artifice that all unprejudiced minds will look upon in its true light. We have already seen what these men call a "fair trial." What they call "fair," we pronounce most unjust and unfair; and we believe the unprejudiced judgment of the church and the community will pronounce such secret-meeting proceedings as were had in Bro. Roberts' case of last year, not only unjust and unfair, but will brand such trial proceedings as sham-like and grossly unjust.

The sham nature of these trials is seen, again, in the partiality of the subjects upon whom they are fixed. If it is a matter of guilt, or moral wrong, to circulate these fly-sheets, and if we should acknowledge that this guilt or wrongdoing was proved against Bro. Roberts, and if a penalty of any nature is to be inflicted on him for said acts, then, we wish to know, why fix on one, or two, or three men of this Conference as worthy of charges and Conference censure, while many others in the Conference, equally guilty, are passed by unnoticed? Why this making the very same act a venial offence in one man, and a mortal sin in another? Why, we ask, is Rev. B. T. Roberts fixed upon as guilty and blame-worthy, when those who stand opposed to him in the matters of our Conference issues, are unnoticed, though guilty of the very same thing charged upon him? Mr. Chairman, we need not ask why; for we know why. It is simply, sir, because he is a man "who has the boldness to question the supremacy" of the clique known as the Buffalo Regency. This seems to be about the head and front of the offending of Bro.

Roberts. Did he not "question their supremacy," and damage their craft, and expose their secret plottings, and make bare their wrong-doings, and wrong doctrines and teachings, this bill of charges had never been presented against him, and four days of the time of this Conference would not have been consumed in the traversing of this case.

The prosecuting counsel, in a fruitless effort to worm himself out of this dark feature in this palpable injustice perpetrated against Bro. Roberts, says, "What have we to do with others? He is the man. The question is not, Have *others* circulated these documents? but, Has Bro. Roberts circulated them?" Exactly so! *This is precisely the question!* The question is not, How many others have circulated them? Or, how many of them have others circulated? These are questions of no importance whatever. The all-important question is, Has Bro. Roberts circulated them? And why, we beg to know, is this the question? The answer is at hand in the language of this item. It is simply and solely because he "has the boldness to question the supremacy in our Conference" of this Buffalo Regency clique. Let this fact be distinctly kept in mind. Did Bro. Roberts pusillanimously submit to the arbitrary dictation and control of this secret clique in our Conference, he would to day be in as high esteem among these men as any brother in the Conference. But, sir, he has involved himself in difficulty, simply because he has the manliness, integrity and boldness to question the supremacy of, and hurl defiance at a secret power in our Conference, which marks every man as a victim who does not submit to its arbitrary rule.

Having thus reviewed these items in the light of the testimony before us, and having seen the cloud of facts that come in to substantiate the truthfulness of all the points we have attempted to sustain, we are willing to

submit to the decision of any impartial tribunal, the question, should Bro. Roberts, or any other man, be pronounced guilty of "unchristian and immoral conduct" for uttering the sentiments of these items? Had the efforts been successful to prove that Bro. Roberts had published and circulated the fly-sheet, this Conference could not, with any show of justice, pronounce him guilty of "unchristian and immoral conduct," for publishing those sections in these items, the sentiments of which we have vindicated and shown to be true, in the light of the evidences and facts we have presented to this Conference.

But the efforts of the prosecution to prove the agency of Bro. Roberts in the publication and circulation, have been a palpable failure. We have proved by the publisher of the pamphlet, that Bro. Roberts had not the slightest agency in its publication: that he never contributed in any way a single cent for that object, and it does not appear that Bro. Roberts even knew of the intention of its publication until after it was issued.

There is not, then, as all must see, the slightest ground upon which to base a pretext for the conviction of the defendant; and his conviction, under these circumstances, would be an outrage on justice scarce ever paralleled in the history of ecclesiastical jurisprudence.

It will be well for us to remember, that whatever may be the action of this Conference in this case, that after we have passed upon it, it is to go before the tribunal of the Church and the world. Whatever may be our decision, their verdict will, doubtless, be that of acquittal. We should remember that the influences of this trial are not to be confined to this court-room. Without doubt, it will "affect the people and the harmony of our Zion." The people are watching with intense interest our action in this case, and it will not answer for us to say, as has been said by the prosecution, "what have we to do with out

side influences?" We shall learn that we have much to do with "outside influences" and "outside influences" have much to do with us.

As I love the church of my choice, in which I have lived and labored for the past few years, and in which I mean to live and labor until I die, so deeply do I feel an interest in the influences of this trial on the harmony and peace of our Methodist Zion in this section of the work. Such are the surrounding influences of this trial, the influences which have induced it, and the issues pending, that its results upon the interests of our church must inevitably be wide-spread and lasting for good or evil.

Bro. Roberts is well known to be an ardent lover of, and zealous defender of, the Methodist Episcopal Church. From a special intimacy with him for years past, I know as but few others do, how deep and ardent are his attachments to our church. His labors in this church of his choice have been remarkably blessed of the Lord, since he entered its ministry. Wherever he has labored, God has given him seals of his ministry, and favor with the people. The past year has been one of marked success in his ministry. The people expect and desire his return. It is well known that he has so endeared himself to the people of his several charges, as but few among us have ever done. To all appearances, as bright a future of usefulness and of ministerial success lies before him, if permitted to labor on uninterruptedly, as that of any man in our Conference. Now, can it be possible, with the evidences of the innocency of the defendant which we have before us, that we, as a Conference, shall dare in any way, to peril his career of usefulness, by pronouncing Conference censure upon him, for a single act, even if said act be admitted to have transpired, of which, if he be blameworthy at all, he only stands in equal condemnation with, perhaps, half of the members of this Conference? If from the

evidences and the facts in the case we now have before us, Benjamin T. Roberts is worthy of Conference censure in any degree, then, we ask, emphatically, where is the man among us who is guiltless? "Let him who is without sin cast the first stone."

CLOSING PLEA BY REV. B. T. ROBERTS.

MR. PRESIDENT: It is fitting that I should, in this public manner, before this large audience, express to you* my sincere thanks for the able and impartial manner in which you have presided during this protracted investigation.—Whatever the result may be, I shall always cherish for you, sir, the liveliest feelings of gratitude for the kindness you have manifested to me personally, and the equitable spirit which has prompted the decisions which you have, from time to time, been obliged to make.

Fathers and Brethren of the Conference: I will not endeavor to conceal from you the disappointment I felt in not being able to procure a committee, as provided for in the Discipline. But as you have chosen to take the decision of the case into your own hands, I trust you will remember that in reality the same responsibility rests upon you personally, as though the determination of the question devolved upon each one of you alone. For months, intimations have been current† that several who have been instrumental in promoting what such veterans of the cross as Rev. John P. Kent and Rev. Asa Abell consider nothing more nor less than the life and power of godliness, must be put out of the Conference. The *Advocate*

*Bishop Jancs.

†The *Advocate* of Aug. 26th, says of Mr. Roberts: "*The truth is, the days of his darling schemes of ambition are nearly numbered.*" This is the tone of one confident that he is, at least, the mouth-piece of those who have the power of life and death; and who have resolved upon their victim! Omnipotence itself could hardly use more positive language!

of last week says. "For years past a disturbing element has existed in it, which the conservative and leading portion of the body are determined to control and put out if possible during the present session." No one can mistake the meaning of this language. Does the editor speak by authority when he says, "the leading portion," the *Regency*, "ARE DETERMINED to *put out the disturbing element*," the leaders of the opposing party? Will you, by your action, show that the result to be arrived at in this and similar cases, has been "determined" upon long ago, without any regard to the testimony adduced, and the facts elicited? Certain it is that in ordinary times, by unprejudiced men, no notice whatever would be taken of such charges as those against us; much less could an adverse decision be obtained.

In the examination of witnesses, we have gone into the details of this case, not because we deemed it necessary to our complete vindication, but because we would have your eyes open to the state of things that exists among us, as a Conference. The brethren of the other side have repeatedly denied that they have any secret society or any secret meetings. In our charity, we believed there were honest men in the Conference who, blinded by these protestations, were led to give their countenance to schemes they would never tolerate, if the delusion was dissipated and things made to appear as they are. For their sakes we have opened the secret chambers of iniquity, and permitted you to see men professing godliness—the accredited ministers of Jesus Christ—plotting, under the pledge of secrecy, and in the guise of devotion to the church, the overthrow of their unsuspecting brethren. I shall not go into details; my friend has done that ably and fully. In my remarks, I shall confine myself to those points that have, as I conceive, a direct bearing upon the question at issue. I shall pass over all which, however important in

itself, is irrelevant to the case. This trial grows out of the one of last year. I am charged with "contumacy," in disregarding the action of this Conference at its last session. I do not know in what way I disregarded its action. When friends came, in the dead of night, and informed me of the action of the Conference in my case, I arose from my couch, put on my apparel, and repaired with all haste to the Conference room, and received, with resignation, the reproof that the Bishop was directed to administer. If there was any admonition to pursue a better course in the future, I am sure I never heard of it until this present trial was commenced. I was not present when the vote was taken, but I have inquired of several reliable brethren who were, and they think there was no such addition to the reproof. But it so stands upon the Journal, and such we must presume to be the action of the Conference.* But be that as it may, I have honestly endeavored to do better than I have ever done before. I have tried to be instant in season and out of season, always abounding in the work of the Lord. I have gone, "not only to those who wanted me, but to those who wanted me most." The Lord has been pleased to own my unworthy, though sincere efforts, to promote His cause, to a greater degree than in any former period of my ministry. He has permitted me to see many souls rejoice in a present, free and full salvation, who one year ago were walking in the ways of sin and death. I believe in growing in grace; and it appears to me that I have grown in grace the past year; and if spared, I will endeavor to in the year to come.

If the want of a cordial acquiescence in the justice of the decision of last year be contumacy, then I am contu-

*The Secretary is one of the strongest partisans of the Regency faction in the Conference.

macious. I always felt that that trial was a farce, and that decision an outrage. Fifty-two men voted me guilty of "immoral and unchristian conduct," when I knew I was not guilty. Galileo was once compelled by a council, that claimed as much wisdom and infallibility as this body of ministers can, to retract his statement that the earth moved instead of the sun. But after his retraction, he was heard to say, in an undertone, "but the earth does move after all." Their saying that our planet stands still, did not make it so. Voting a man immoral, does not render him immoral. The vote of last year, obtained as it was, did not occasion me the loss of self-respect; nor did it lessen, so far as I could learn, in the slightest degree, the confidence which those who know me have always honored me with. Nor could I ever persuade myself that those who voted me guilty of immorality, in reality believed this to be the case.* I made no retraction nor apology. No effort was put forth to explain away the force of what I had written. I constantly affirmed that I believed it to be true, and I offered to prove it if a fair chance were given me; yet these same men who voted me guilty of immorality, voted to pass my character, and sent me forth to preach the Gospel. I must believe, then, *that they voted me guilty when they did not believe this to be the case; or, is it their deliberate judgment, expressed in the most solemn manner, that immorality does not unfit a man for being a Minister of Jesus Christ, and a member of this Conference?*

The article on New School Methodism, which was the ostensible cause of the trial of last year, as also of the present one, was written in good faith, and with all the

*The man who figures most conspicuously in the prosecutions against Mr. Roberts said last year, after he had put forth the most strenuous exertions to convict him of immorality, "I believe if there is a good man in the Conference that enjoys religion, it is Bro. Roberts."

candor and impartiality that I could command. For years the Conference has been divided; different members of the Regency party have, from time to time, published what we conceived to be very unfair accounts of the question at issue. These representations, usually made in the *Buffalo Advocate*, being uncontradicted, were producing their effects. Many began to think they must be true, or a contrary statement would be made. We thought the time had come for us to set forth our views of the ground of the division; I wished to do it fairly. If we were holding a discussion with the Universalists; as they have no written, common creed, and we should find in their paper an article by one of their leading men, on the points at issue, and no one dissented from this article, we should be treating them with controversial fairness if we quoted it, and held them, as a sect, responsible. This is the principle on which controversies are generally conducted. I adopted this plan. I found in *The Advocate* of the Buffalo Regency two articles written by the literary champion of the party, on the doctrines which constitute, as I believe, the real issue in this Conference. I waited some six or eight weeks, and no one expressed a dissent from the views thus publicly put forth: on the contrary, I heard that the articles were endorsed by leading men of the party. I thought, then, that I should be treating them with *greater* fairness by giving their views in the language of one of their own writers than in any other way. I quoted a paragraph at a time and showed wherein we differed. The article was submitted to the Rev's Asa Abell, E. S. Furman and John Bowman.* They thought it a just statement of the differences that agitate this Conference. The article was published over my own proper sig-

*The latter was well qualified to judge, having been identified with the Regency party.

nature. I have reason to believe that disinterested persons, capable of judging, saw nothing in it morally wrong. A minister† occupying, by appointment of the General Conference, a prominent position in the church, wrote me as follows: "Your article appears to me to be written in as mild and candid a tone as such facts can be stated in." A Presiding Elder‡ and prominent member of one of the Eastern Conferences, an entire stranger to me personally, on seeing my article in the papers, wrote me, thanking me for having written it, saying that the new Divinity was creeping into their Conference, and doing immense mischief, and exhorting me to "keep the monster in the light." A leading member of another Conference said: "On reading your article I was particularly struck with its candor." If I misrepresented any one, (as I do not think I did,) it was unintentional. The same paper in which my article was published was open for a reply; but none was furnished: they chose to meet me with votes, rather than with argument.

Before the trial was commenced, I stated in open Conference, "That I had written the article on New School Methodism in good faith, and with a desire to do justice to all concerned. I had, as I supposed, good reason to hold the party responsible for the views set forth in the articles in the *Advocate*, from which I quoted; if I was mistaken, I would be glad to correct the mistake. If the brethren concerned will say that those articles do not represent their views, I will publish in the *Independent*, and in all other papers that they may desire me to, that I was mistaken—that they do not hold the views which I said they did."

What more could I do? If I had misrepresented them,

†Rev. F. G. Hibbard, D. D., then Editor of *The Northern Christian Advocate*.

‡Rev. Wm. Reddy, of the Oneida Conference of the M. E. Church.

through mistake, I was anxious to do all I could to make amends; if I was laboring under a false impression in regard to their views, were they not bound as men, and as Christians, when I sought to be corrected, to make the correction? Yet no one said he had been misrepresented—no disavowal was made of the doctrines that I imputed to them. Can it be wondered at that their silence, under these circumstances, confirmed me in the conviction that what I had written was true? If I was mistaken, why not give me the authority to correct it? Does not their course demonstrate that I was not mistaken?

They brought a charge against me of “immoral and unchristian conduct,” for writing that article. In the specifications, they charge me with writing what I never wrote. It is a well-established principle of common law, that in all actions for libel, the precise language complained of as libelous must be set forth in the complaint. It will not do to say, “or words to that effect,” or “it amounts to that.” There is no safety in any other principle. Yet I was charged with saying what I never said, or intended, and what can not be made out of my words by any honest construction. Thus the first specification reads: “In publishing in the *Northern Independent* that there exists in the Genesee Conference an associate body, numbering about thirty, whose teaching is very different from that of the fathers of Methodism.” I never published any such thing. I say, “Already there is springing up among us a class of preachers whose teaching is very different from that of the fathers of Methodism. They may be found here and there throughout our Zion; but in the Genesee Conference they act as an associate body. They number about thirty.” There is an essential difference between “existing” and “acting” as an associate body. “To *exist* as an associate body,” implies a permanent organization; but men may “*act as an associate body*,” who

never saw one another before, and who may never meet again.

Though I never affirmed that they "exist as an associate body," yet I had no doubt of it at the last Conference; I did not say it, yet I offered to prove it.

As the association is a secret one, its existence could be proved only by some of its members. One of them was called upon the stand. He was questioned about his knowledge of a secret association, composed of members of this Conference. The question was objected to. It was decided* that the question must be framed so as to embody this idea, "Do you know of an associate body of men, numbering about thirty, whose *teaching is very different from that of the fathers of Methodism?*" Thus the witness was called upon to do two things which no court of equity would have required,—first, to criminate himself; second, to become a judge of opinion. He should have stated what they taught, and left it for the court to determine whether it accorded with the doctrines of the fathers of Methodism, or not. Thus restricted, I made no further attempt to examine witnesses.

The second specification charges me with "publishing, as above, that said members of the Genesee Conference are opposed to what is fundamental in Christianity—to the nature itself of Christianity."

I published nothing like it. This is what I said: "It (the Conference) is divided. . . . This difference is fundamental. It does not relate to things indifferent, but to those of the most vital importance. It involves nothing less than the nature itself of Christianity."

Who does not know that parties may differ about what "is fundamental in Christianity," and yet neither of them be opposed to it? The Calvinists and Arminians differ

*By Bishop Baker.

about the atonement; and yet neither of them are opposed to the atonement. We differ from the Baptists about baptism: and yet neither are opposed to baptism.

Upon the principle they pursued, it would be just as easy to condemn the Saviour as myself. A Jew brings against him the charge of slander, or libel. Specification—"In saying that Moses, Job, and Daniel were thieves and robbers." Proof—in the tenth chapter of John it is recorded that Jesus said: "ALL THAT EVER CAME BEFORE ME ARE THIEVES AND ROBBERS." This is a broad assertion.—He makes no exception nor qualification. It cannot be denied that Moses, Job, and Daniel came before him, therefore he says that Moses, Job, and Daniel are thieves and robbers.

This is better reasoning than that by which I was convicted, last year, "of immoral and unchristian conduct."

The testimony taken in this case shows the manner in which the verdict of last year was obtained. It is proved that "select" meetings were held, over Bryant & Clark's store; that "brethren present" in these "select" meetings, "pledged themselves, by rising, to keep to themselves the proceedings of this meeting." This is what the Minutes say; and De Forest Parsons, who tells us he was Chairman of those meetings, "thinks THEY DID" so pledge themselves. Such proceedings were had in these "select" meetings, that it was not considered safe to allow a stranger, who had been invited in, to remain. Thomas Carlton tells us, his "impression is, that some one, not a member of our Conference, was invited to go out. Some one spoke to him, and he went out. Why should he be with us when we were talking of Conference matters? And some one spoke to him, and he went out!"

Why was this brother invited to go out, if nothing improper was expected to be done? If "talking over Conference matters" was a sufficient reason for excluding him

from those "select" meetings, would it not be an equally good reason for excluding strangers from the Conference room? It is evident why they wished him to go out.— They intended to do something that would not bear the light. If these meetings were seasons of such "great spiritual interest," as one witness would have us believe, and if they were devoted, as Bro. Carlton has endeavored to convince us, in his examination of witnesses, to *consultations about the best modes of promoting revivals of religion, the work of holiness, and the enforcement of the discipline*, it would seem that this brother, though not a member of our Conference, would have been allowed to remain, that he, too, might be "refreshed" and instructed. It is difficult to imagine how men engaged in such *holy* work, could perpetrate so great an act of cruelty, as to turn out a brother, who was quietly waiting to listen and learn.

The Minutes of that secret meeting, which, though repeatedly read, have not been questioned by any one, state that it was "moved that we will not allow the character of B. T. Roberts to pass, until he has had a fair trial.— Passed." The Chairman does not deny that such action was had, but tells us that he does "not remember such motion." He says, "There was conversation concerning his case; and the general sentiment, so far as expressed, was, that he should have a fair trial."

Here are all the elements of a conspiracy to ruin the ministerial character of an absent brother: First, a pledge of secrecy; second, turning out one whom, they thought, could not be trusted with their secret doings; third, an expression to give him "a fair trial," which was, doubtless, understood to mean, "we will vote for his condemnation." If this was not the understanding, how did it happen that these men stood up in a solid body against me? They alone condemned me.

If it be a sin to question the righteousness of a verdict bringing me in guilty of "immoral and unchristian conduct," for publishing what was never published—a verdict agreed upon in the secret conclave of an opposing party—I trust it is not a mortal sin. Ever since that verdict was rendered, I have thought that it was utterly wrong and wicked, admitting of no apology or palliation. I presume I shall always be of the same opinion.

The pamphlet which forms the basis of the present trial, contains the article for which I was tried last year, and another article, by Geo. W. Estes, giving the charge and specifications, together with a short account of the trial. This latter part contains some things that I never approved of, and which I have always regretted were ever published.

I stand charged with "publishing, or assisting in the publication and circulation" of this entire document.—The opposing counsel has labored earnestly to give the term "publishing" the technical signification of "making public," using many times the phrase, "circulating, and thereby publishing." But this, I am certain, is not the sense in which the term was used when the charges were framed. They expected to prove that I had something to do, in some way, with publishing the document—that is, in issuing it from the press. The phraseology of the specification must satisfy any one of this. Yet, if any doubt remains that the popular sense of the word "publishing" is the sense in which it was intended, a single fact will remove every doubt. Since this trial was commenced, the editor of the Brockport paper, who printed the document under consideration, was sent for, by the opposite side, post haste. He came on as quick as he could come, changing horses by the way; but, after being closeted with the counsel, was sent back, without being called upon the stand, or any intimation given to us that he was

present. I suppose they found out the facts in the case—that I had nothing to do whatever, directly or indirectly, with publishing the pamphlet. But this makes no difference with them; they set their wits to work, and call in the help of legal technicalities.

Not only is there an utter absence of proof that I published, or assisted in publishing, the document so offensive to them, but the proof is positive, that I had nothing to do with it whatever.

George W. Estes testified that I did not publish, nor assist in publishing, or defraying the expense of publishing the document under consideration; that I never consented to the republication of "New School Methodism;" nor had anything to do with writing the part that bears his name; that I did not, to his knowledge, even know that its publication was intended. The testimony is explicit; it comes from a responsible source—from a highly respected exhorter in our church.

The only foundation that remains on which to rest the heavy charge of "immoral and unchristian conduct," is the alleged circulation of this document. Suppose the proof of circulation were ever so conclusive, this would constitute no reason why I should be put on my trial for immoral conduct, as though some great crime had been committed. Had I been permitted to go on, I should have shown that there are but few preachers in the Conference that have not circulated it more or less. One witness testifies that he obtained twenty-six—bought some, and some were given to him—but declines to tell what he did with them.

Is he immoral? Is every one immoral that has circulated that pamphlet? No one believes it; yet no one could have as good a reason for circulating it as myself.—On going to my charge, last fall, an entire stranger, I found that one of the preachers, on his way from Conference, had stopped with one of the principal families of the

society with which I was appointed to labor. In answer to the usual inquiries about the new preacher, he told them that he was the one that was convicted of immoral conduct, on nine out of ten specifications.

Of course, they felt like not receiving the preacher.—They could not think what they had done, that they should have one sent to them to preach the Gospel who had been convicted of immoral conduct.

During the year I was invited to preach in a church of another denomination. Before the time came for filling the appointment, our preacher, stationed in the place, called upon the pastor of the church where I was to preach, and gravely informed him that the person who was to occupy his pulpit had been convicted of immoral conduct at the last session of Conference.

The *Buffalo Advocate*, and the *Christian Advocate and Journal*, have published to the world, that I was found guilty of “immoral and unchristian conduct;” and, when a friend of mine sought to make an explanation, through the columns of the *Advocate and Journal*, he was refused permission. Could anything be more natural than that I should desire to have my friends read the article for which I had been condemned, that they might judge for themselves, whether there was anything that should occasion them to withdraw their confidence? It was, undoubtedly, a conviction of the propriety of this, that excited the unfounded suspicion that I had something to do with the republication of “New School Methodism.”

The account which George Estes gives of the trial, is the only account that was ever published. It contains some rather sharp things; and yet there is nothing by any means as severe as may be found in the writings of John Wesley, the founder of our denomination. Wesley says of his brethren, the clergy: “There are, among yourselves, ungodly and unholy men—openly, undeniably

such—drunkards, gluttons, returners of evil for evil, liars, swearers, profaners of the day of the Lord.”—Vol. v., p. 24. The Archbishop of York sent a paternal address to the clergy of his diocese. Part of it ran nearly, if not exactly, thus :

“There is great indiscretion in preaching up a sort of religion, as the true and only Christianity, which, in their own account of it, consists in an enthusiastic ardor, to be understood, or attained, by very few, and not to be practiced without breaking in upon the common duties of life.”

Wesley replies to this in the following severe terms:—“O, my lord, what manner of words are these! Supposing candor and love out of the question, are they the words of truth? I dare stake my life upon it, there is not one true clause in all this paragraph.”—p. 42. Why did not his grace have him turned out of the church, upon a charge of libel, for accusing him of lying?

He charges some who call themselves Protestants with being worse than Bonner. “Why, Edmund Bonner would have starved the heretics in prison; whereas you starved them in their own houses!”—Vol. v., p. 91.

“What cobbler in London is not wiser than the principal Secretary of State? What coffee-house disputer is not an oracle divine than his grace of Canterbury?”—Vol. v., p. 121.

Of his brethren, the clergy, he says: “There are found among us covetous men,” men who “mind earthly things,” who “seek themselves” and not Christ crucified, who “love the world and the things of the world.”—Vol. v., p. 125. Again: “How many are there who do not study to speak what is true, especially to the rich and great, so much as what is pleasing? Who flatter honorable sinners instead of telling them plain, ‘How can ye escape the damnation of hell?’”—P. 127.

Of some of the clergy he says: “You it is certain have

shown the utmost hatred to us, and in every possible way; unless you were actually to beat us (of which also we are not without precedent,) or shoot us through the head; and if you could prevail upon others to do this I suppose you would think you did God service. * * * * * It is, my brethren, your own preaching, and not ours, which sets the people against you. The very same persons who are diverted with those sermons, cannot but despise you for them in their heart; even those who on your authority believe most of the assertions which you advance. What then must they think of you, who know the greatest part of what you assert to be utterly false? They may pity and pray for you; but they can esteem you no other than false witnesses against God and your brethren.”—Vol. v., p. 162.

“God begins a glorious work in our land, you set yourself against it with all your might to prevent its beginning where it does not yet appear, and to destroy it wherever it does. In part you prevail. You keep many from hearing the word that is able to save their souls. Others who had heard it you induce to turn from God, and to list under the devil’s banner again. Then you make the success of your own wickedness an excuse for not acknowledging the work of God! You urge that not many sinners reformed; and that some of them are as bad as ever! Whose fault is this? Is it ours or your own? Why have not thousands more been reformed? Yea, for every one who is now turned to God, why are there not ten thousand? Because you and your associates labored too heartily in the cause of hell; because you and they spared no pains either to prevent or to destroy the work of God!—By using all the power and wisdom you had, you hindered thousands from hearing the Gospel which they might have found to be the power of God unto salvation. Their blood is upon your heads. By inventing or countenancing,

or retailing lies, some refined, some gross and palpable, you hindered others from profiting by what they did hear. You are answerable to God for these souls also. Many who began to taste the good word, and run the way of God's commandments, you, by various methods, prevailed on to hear it no more; so they soon drew back to perdition. But know, that for every one of these also, God will require an account of you in the day of judgment."

Wesley lived in a comparatively dark age of the world. A superstitious reverence was still felt for the priesthood, especially for its higher order. The freedom of the press was not fully established. Wesley had made himself extremely abnoxious to the ministry of his own church. He had totally disregarded the established ways of the church and violated her plainest canons. Yet he could scandalize the priesthood with impunity! Could tell them that there were among them "drunkards," "swearers," "liars," "profaners of the day of the Lord." Could charge an Archbishop with writing a paragraph that did not "*contain one true clause in it.*" Could charge his brethren in the ministry with "*setting themselves with all their might against a glorious work of God.*" With "*laboring heartily in the cause of hell.*" With "*inventing or countenancing, or retailing lies.*"

Of course those against whom these charges were brought did not admit their truth. Yet even in that dark age, among a ministry that we are accustomed to regard as very deficient in piety, there was too much light and too much of the spirit of Christ to attempt to put down an opponent by Ecclesiastical prosecution, whom they could not silence by argument! Can it be possible that in an age and country that boasts of the freedom of speech and of the press, the professed followers of John Wesley should exhibit a degree of intolerance that was never manifested by his bitterest enemies in the height of their op-

position? The spirit that dictated the prosecution of last year and this, would be much more befitting a narrow-minded monk of the middle age, than a Protestant Minister in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

If, then, instead of having had nothing to do whatever with the publication of the offending "document," I had actually written it, no just ground would have existed for this partisan trial.

But let us look more closely into this matter of circulation. I think it will be seen that if the document were ever so unsuitable for circulation, the testimony is totally insufficient to convict me even of that.

Rev. J. P. Kent, a friend that I trust, testified that "he asked me for one; and that I told him I *did not* circulate them, but had no objection to his seeing the one that I had."

Rev. R. Wilcox, a local deacon in our church in Pekin, where I have labored the past year, a man with whom I have been very intimate, testifies that he "*first* saw the pamphlet after he left home on his way to the Conference!" Never saw one in Pekin! This shows that I could not have been very industrious in circulating it.

The *only* witness that testifies to my having any agency in its circulation is Rev. John Bowman. His testimony is in substance as follows: "Bro. Roberts gave me a package containing three dozen of the pamphlets, on the cars between Lockport and Medina. He requested me to circulate them. He desired me to leave a portion of them with Bro. Codd or Bro. Williams of Medina, provided I fell in company with them. I asked him whether they were to be distributed gratuitously or sold; he said he would like to get enough to defray the expenses of printing, but circulate them anyhow. He mentioned he had been at some considerable expense."

In his cross-examination, he says: "I was counsel for

defendant in his trial last year. He appeared to repose confidence in me." . . . "I told him I would take the documents and consider the case. I took them home and put them away in a by-place. . . . About six weeks ago I lent Dr. Chamberlayne several copies."

From this testimony, supposing it to be correct—and it is all there is to prove that I had any agency in the circulation of this "document"—it does not appear that a single copy ever became public through my instrumentality. The most that can be made of it is that I *once* made an attempt to circulate it, but was unsuccessful.

But let us see what reliance, if any, is to be placed on this testimony. The conversation he professes to relate, is alleged to have taken place soon after I was tried by this Conference, for issuing the first edition of New School Methodism. He says he was my counsel, and that I appeared to repose confidence in him. According to his own statement he was a betrayer of confidence! of confidence growing out of a professional relation; which among the most unprincipled of men is regarded as sacred! This throws suspicion over his entire testimony.

Hume, in his History of England, in relating the fact of one nobleman's accusing another in Parliament "of having spoken to him in private many slanderous words of the King," says of the accuser, that he "was certainly very little delicate in the point of honor, when he revealed a private conversation to the ruin of the person who had intrusted him; and we may thence be more inclined to believe the other's denial than his asseveration."

This is the morality of an infidel! But little reliance is to be placed upon the declaration of that man who betrays his friend! Shall the standard of morality among Christian Ministers fall below that of unbelievers? Shall we allow that the man who wantonly betrays his brother, that had honored him with his confidence, is to be unequal-

ifiedly believed ?* His testimony should be taken at a great discount, even if it was entirely uncontradicted.

But, in one material point, it is contradicted by a witness entirely reliable. Bowman says: "Bro. Roberts mentioned that he had been at some considerable expense, in getting the document printed." That I never could have told him so, is evident from the testimony of George Estes, who published the pamphlet. He says that "Bro. Roberts had not, so far as he knows, any knowledge that its publication was intended; that he never was responsible, in whole or in part, for the payment of its publication; and that he (Bro. Roberts) never, to his knowledge, contributed anything to the expenses of its publication!" George Estes told the truth!

It is well understood that in our church trials we are not allowed to impeach, in form, any witness who is a member of our church, no matter how easily it might be done. The *only* impeachment that is allowed, is, to show that he has made to other persons, statements contradicting those which he has made as a witness. If this can be

*Dante, the Milton of Italy, in his *Divina Comedia*, divides hell into nine circles. The least guilty among the lost he places in the outer or first circle, where the punishment is slightest. The more wicked are placed in the second, and so on according to the enormity of their crimes. The ninth or last circle is reserved for the most flagitious sinners. The circle is divided into four wards; in the inmost round of the inmost circle—the very centre of hell, exposed to the immediate torments of Satan himself—he places those who betrayed the confidence reposed in them by friends. He says:

'Fraud, that in every conscience leaves a sting,
May be by man employed on one, whose trust
He wins, or on another who withholds
Strict confidence. Seems as the latter way
Broke but the bond of love which Nature makes.

The other way

Forgets both Nature's general love, and that
Which thereto added afterward gives birth
To special faith. Whence in the lesser circle,
Point of the universe, dread seat of Dis,
The traitor is eternally consumed."

Cary's translation. Canto xi.

shown, the witness stands impeached, to all intents and purposes. His testimony is to be discredited.

Let us see how the case stands with Rev. John Bowman. When called to testify upon another point, he says, "*He cannot say that there was any threat*" made to him if he did not take back what he had said in favor of Bro. Kingsley: "We all would suffer in common, in consequence of our having an inefficient Presiding Elder."—This, according to his statement as a witness, was all the consequence that another preacher said would follow to him, "personally," if he did not retract his eulogy of Bro. Kingsley.

Compare this with what he said to others, in relation to this matter.

Rev. R. E. Thomas testifies that "Bro. Bowman told me that a member of the Conference said to him, if he did not take back what he had said in reference to Bro. Kingsley, on the Conference floor, he would rue it."

Rev. C. C. Church, Rev. E. S. Furman, and Rev. Wm. Barrett, all testify to the same effect as Bro. Thomas.—Bro. Barrett adds, that Bro. Bowman told him, more than twenty times during the year, that he had been threatened by a member of this Conference, if he did not take back what he had said in favor of Bro. Kingsley.

We all know how much more readily we remember matters affecting us personally, than we do those which relate to others. Narrating an event frequently, has, also, a strong tendency to fix it in the memory. Yet here is a threat made to Rev. John Bowman personally, which he has mentioned to four different preachers, during the year, and to one of them a score of times at least, (others might have been brought, if necessary) and yet, when he is called to testify in relation to it, "*He cannot say that any threat was made*" to him at all! Can any reliance be placed upon a witness whose memory is so treacherous? Not the

least credit would be given to such testimony in a court of justice. Such is the *only* witness* brought forward to prove my agency in the circulation of this document.—Were not this testimony of so extremely doubtful character, it would still be insufficient to procure a conviction. In the Statute Book, that ought to govern in this case, we read: “Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But, if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that, in the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word may be established.”—Matt. xviii. 15, 16.

The first direction has never been followed. Though the offense is charged to have been committed in the early part of the Conference year, no brother has so much as intimated that he considered himself trespassed against.

Again, we read: “Against an Elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses.”—I Tim. v. 19. In accordance with these plain passages, is the provision of our Discipline, which says: “Out of the mouth of two or three witnesses, he shall be condemned.”

This, then, is the law of the Church. It requires the testimony of two or more witnesses. The language is explicit and unambiguous. *Some of the parties concerned in this prosecution, are far more deeply interested than we possibly can be, in establishing the doctrine that more than one witness is necessary to secure the conviction of an Elder.*

In this case, there is the testimony of only one witness;

*The course of this witness in Conference matters reminds one of what Homer says of the treacherous God of War:

“From these to those he flies,
And every side of wavering combat tries,
Large promise makes and breaks the promise made,
Now gives the Grecians, now the Trojans aid.”

and that has been impeached, as fully as the testimony of a member of our church can be impeached.

It has been urged, at great length, by the opposing counsel, that, because we went into the merits of the case, and showed that many things in the pamphlet are true, therefore we ought to be condemned, whether there is any proof that we circulated it or not. This is strange logic. We are charged with publishing, or assisting in the publication and circulation of, a certain document; and, if we are to be condemned, we insist upon it, that we ought to be first proved guilty of what has been charged against us. We protest against being condemned, because we have not conducted the defense in a manner more satisfactory to the opposing counsel. My friend, Br. Stiles, has done nobly; I have done the best I could; and if we have, in our inexperience, committed any mistakes in the management of this case, I insist upon it, that I ought not to be brought in guilty of "immoral and unchristian conduct," on that account.*

The counsel has dwelt long and earnestly upon the aggravated nature of the offense charged. If the accusation had been for the most atrocious crime, it could not have been urged with greater vehemence and zeal. Libel is an offense that may or may not involve moral delinquency.—Some of the best men in our church have been convicted of libel—not before a partisan tribunal, but by a civil court, and mulcted in damages. The venerated Bishops, Emery, and Waugh, and Dr. Bangs, were brought in, by

*Since the trial, I learn that some who voted against me, attempt to rescue themselves on the ground that we attempted a vindication of the statements of the pamphlets. They say if we had made no defense we would have been acquitted. Yet these same men voted against us last year when we did not examine a single witness! We attempted the examination of only one. If this information be correct, it would seem that I was convicted of "unchristian and immoral conduct," not for "publishing and circulating" the pamphlet, but for attempting to bring to light the secret doings of the Regency party!

an impartial jury, guilty of libeling a business man, and yet they suffered no loss of confidence on that account.

But here the most strenuous exertions are put forth to make out that in the long catalogue of crime, there is none of quite so deep a dye, as the handing, to a supposed friend, of a package of pamphlets, which contain some animadversions upon a party of men, which they are pleased to consider libelous.

To the accusation which has been so repeatedly made, of my being a young man, I plead guilty. To the liability of human nature to be mistaken in judgment, I claim no exemption. But allow me to suggest, that if I have fallen into any mistakes, the best way to correct them will not be by partisan prosecutions, under frivolous pretexts. Their tendency will rather be to create the suspicion that my position is one that could not be successfully assailed by argument. Convince me that I am wrong, and you shall find no man more ready to confess it, and more willing to be set right.

Finally, brethren, allow me to say that I do not affect any indifference as to the results of this investigation. I have an ardent attachment for the church of my choice. I love her doctrines, her usages, and her aggressive spirit. If I have erred at all, it has been occasioned by loving the church too much, rather than too little. Any departure from the landmarks of Methodism has awakened jealous solicitude, and called forth whatever influence I possessed, to persuade our people to "ask for the old paths, that they might walk therein." It has been my offense not to have labored altogether in vain. We have been favored by the Great Head of the Church, with revivals, deep and powerful, such as has given to our beloved Zion her present position among the Churches of the Lord.

It would be our delight to continue to toil in the same blessed work, with what little ability and energy the Lord

has been pleased to endow us with. This, above all others, is the service that I delight in, and to which I feel God has specially called and commissioned me from on high.—I do not feel that my work is done, nor my commission from the Lord revoked. I love the Methodist Episcopal Church; no one has ever heard me say ought against her; and I should esteem it my highest privilege to be permitted to put forth mightier efforts than I have ever done, to build up her walls and enlarge her borders.

We are hastening to a great, impartial tribunal, before which all actions must pass in review, and all secrets be revealed. There the deliberations of this hour, and the motives by which we are governed, will be disclosed before an assembled universe. Remember it is written:—
“WITH WHAT JUDGMENT YE JUDGE, YE SHALL BE JUDGED; AND WITH WHAT MEASURE YE METE, IT SHALL BE MEASURED UNTO YOU AGAIN.”

The case was now submitted, and the accused formally expelled—in the utter absence of the least particle of evidence to sustain the charge preferred against him.

CHAPTER VI.

How clear it is, that the foregoing trial was all a sham ! But sham trials are no uncommon thing. They are ever and anon conjured up to save appearances, and afford impunity to tyrants, by clothing injustice and oppression with the forms of law. Ecclesiastical, as well as civil tribunals, are made the arena of these shameful exhibitions—an *altar*, even, upon which the innocent and good have been sacrificed, in all ages and countries, by the arm of power. Such trials are a mighty engine in the hands of anti-Christian Churches ; and they never fail to put them in requisition for the crushing out of “ enthusiasm,” “ fanaticism,” “ contumacy,” and the like, as they call the manifestations of the love of God in the heart ; except where it is deemed safe to dispense with even the formalities of a trial, and rely on the more summary process of ridding themselves of those, whose war upon the sins of the Church give them so much inconvenience, by “ withdrawing them from the Church, (for the Bishop says ‘ they may, in certain cases, ’) without their knowledge or consent ! ”—Such enginery has been very freely used, for a few years past, in the Genesee Conference.

And now, “ Behold the man ”—not “ Jesus of Nazareth,” but one of his faith’ul followers. Aye, “ Behold the man : ” the appearance of the devoted Roberts before the Genesee Conference ! O, how it reminds one of a trial which was perpetrated, more than eighteen hundred years ago, at the bar of Pontius Pilate ! In both cases alike, the clamor of the “ chief priests and elders,” prevailing over the voice

of justice and humanity, the pre-doomed victims were condemned to execution. There was this only material exception to the parallel of the two cases: At Jerusalem, "the judge was supposed to be on the prisoner's side." In the one instance, the victim was crucified, to be sure; and that, too, under circumstances of the most excruciating insult and cruelty; in the other, he was barely turned out of the church, by virtue of the sentence passed against him—the laws of the land, and the state of public opinion, not allowing the actual taking of life in such case—but pursued at the same time with calumnies and detraction, for the evident purpose of shutting him out from all human sympathy, and inflicting upon him something more intolerable than crucifixion—a *living death*!

The expulsion of Messrs. Roberts and McCreery, was followed by that of Rev's Mr. Stiles, Wells, Cooley, and Burlingham, the next year; and the Conference—either to pacify the community, whose sense of right and justice she had so shockingly outraged by her doings, or, "glorifying in her shame"—proceeded to publish something like an official report of the matter in the *Northern Christian Advocate*. Perhaps, too, the fear of the publication of the trial, less favorable to her administration and character, by another hand, determined her to endeavor to pre-occupy the public mind with her own version of it. But though she cannot be suspected of putting forth a report that would be calculated to prejudice her own cause; yet, taking the facts of the case as represented by herself even, the whole proceeding, in general, will be seen to be glaringly at variance with the Discipline of the Church.

For ourself, we were an utter stranger to these brethren, at the time of their expulsion, and of course could have had no predilection in their favor; but feeling that great wrong had been done them, whoever they might be, and that the cause of God and Methodism had been dis-

graced by the way they were dealt with—our only knowledge of the case being derived from the Conference report—we took up our pen and went into a somewhat extended review, of the matter soon after it transpired.—This review, from the justness of its criticisms, and its appropriateness to the character and objects of the history of the Free Methodist Church, is here introduced.

REVIEW.

For the Northern Independent.

BRO. HOSMER:—From the time we first read over the report of the proceedings of the Genesee Conference, in relation to Rev. L. Stiles and others, at its last session, we have felt that so flagrant an outrage upon our common Methodism deserved to be held up to the just reprehension of the church and of the world. As it respects the general subject, you have done it good justice in your well-conducted and very candid editorial columns. But it still remains, we think, to examine some points a little more in detail, and to keep constantly in view a matter so vitally important to the interests and character of the church.

With the exception of the dominant party or clique, by which some of these brethren were arrested and thrown out of the church, and others made to relinquish the right of private judgment in deference to their superiors as the only condition of retaining their membership, the community have pronounced their trial a mere sham—the forms of law having been taken on, while its spirit and import and true intent, as they understand the matter, were shamefully perverted. We cannot say how much glory they may have gained with those who are ever ready to substitute “law and order,” office and authority, for humanity and religion; but nothing has ever transpired in the history of the judicial proceedings of the church, which has

placed us in such ill-odor before the community at large, from the time we first became a people down to the present period. The presiding Bishop, we are sorry to say, shares largely in the feeling of condemnation with which those proceedings are regarded.

In our humble opinion, the charges preferred against these brethren, if true, amounted to very little; particularly when viewed in the light of the specifications into which they were drawn out. But, in general, they were not true; and we are surprised that they were entertained by a grave and enlightened body of divines, for a moment. Nor are we alone in our opinion. The verdict of the popular mind has been rendered to the same effect. This verdict, which could only reach us through the secular press, and the *Northern Independent*—there being no other religious paper which dare give utterance to a sentiment that is adverse to the slave-power among us—determines the proceedings of the Conference to be arbitrary, illegal and oppressive: the individuals expelled having deserved the confidence and commendation of their brethren, instead of the fate they received.

A brief examination of the proceedings in question, as reported by the official organ of the Conference, will suffice to satisfy the candid reader, we believe, that the opinion upon which the public mind has settled down in relation to the matter, is unhappily but too well founded.—But as the brethren excommunicated were all good and useful preachers, having been guilty of no crime, in the judgment of the people with whom they lived and labored; and the charges on which they were condemned were substantially the same in their nature and design;—we shall not trouble ourselves to discriminate in respect to the different cases of trial which were had by the Conference, but treat them all under one common head—leaving the reader, who must have seen or heard the report of

these trials, to refer the matters of complaint to this or that individual complained of, according to the facts in the case.

The main charge preferred against the reputed offender, was "contumacy"—a charge peculiarly Popish in its character, and always employed where the accused individual is intended to be condemned and punished by *authority*, without law or evidence. Nothing, in general, could go farther to evince the innocence and fidelity of the accused, and the tyranny and conscious injustice of the party accusing, than the fact of the arraignment of the former under a charge of this designation. Of all other charges, it is the most appropriate and convenient in such cases. And while the world stands, it will continue to be used as the stereotyped denomination of all charges which have nothing but the envy, or the interest, or the dictum of persecuting tyrants to rest upon.

But, flimsy and accommodating as this general charge was, in the trial of the accused brethren the specifications did not sustain the charge, if able and impartial judges are to be credited in relation to the matter; nor the evidence, the specifications. Of this fact, a sufficient demonstration may be seen in the following brief analysis of some of the cases:

1. Specification: "Receiving expelled brethren into the church, 'without contrition, confession and satisfactory reformation,' as the Discipline requires."

But, (1) this specification does not prove the charge of contumacy—the charge of an obstinate, wilful disobedience to the order and discipline of the church. The thing may have been done, as it often has been, and the accused declares it actually was, in this instance, without any such feeling or design.

And, (2) there was no evidence to sustain the specification; as it seems the "reformation," etc., of the brethren

received, was "satisfactory" to the preacher and society receiving them, and that was all-sufficient. The Discipline did not require that the whole church, or the Conference even, should be satisfied; but merely the society to whom the application for admission was made. But supposing the accused had received expelled members illegally, why did not the Conference remove these members by simply correcting the administration, or declaring it erroneous; and leave the administrator untouched in his character and standing, in accordance with universal usage? Why the infliction of the extremest penalty known to ecclesiastical law? When men of the character of Burlingham are expelled from the church in violation of all law, and of all precedent, for a simple error in administration—which, by the way, he seems not to have been guilty of—we need not be surprised if the people should take the matter in hand, and range themselves on the side of the oppressed.

2. Specification: "In worshiping with these expelled members while they were yet out of the church." As it relates to this specification, it was immaterial to the case in hand, whether it sustained the general charge, or not; since it was not itself sustained by evidence. Of course, the charge of contumacy, attempted to be built upon it, necessarily falls to the ground. The brethren accused did indeed unite in religious worship with members who had been expelled; but as they had been restored to membership again, and licensed to exhort by a *valid*, though it might be illegal administration, they had a perfect right to worship with them, the same as before they were expelled; there being no law or usage of the church to forbid it. The Bishop himself decided that the administration by which these brethren were received into the church was *valid*; and that all were bound by it—preachers and people—till it should be corrected by the Conference.—Why, then, should these brethren be pronounced guilty

of contumacy in the premises? Was it because the Conference were determined to cast them out of the church at all events, and could only execute their horrid purpose by some such means? So it is generally believed by the community; and of course the usefulness of those who were concerned in the business is at end; for it is impossible to benefit the people, as it relates to their spiritual interests and condition, except you have their confidence. We would suggest whether the Rev. authors and procurors of so unhappy a state of things had not better go into the practice of law, (if indeed men of their stamp should be deemed worthy to be admitted at the bar,) and give up the sacred ministry as being altogether unsuited to their character and taste.

3. Specification: "Preaching within the bounds of other charges than their own."

And what if they did? Does this specification prove the charge of contumacy? Well, then, we are all guilty of it: for not to insist that the world is in some sort the parish of every Methodist preacher, and that "he is to save all the souls he can; going not only to those who want him, but to those who want him most;" the preaching beyond the bounds of our own particular charges, or within the bounds of the charges of others, occasionally, has been our custom from the beginning. And, moreover, there is no law against it, except in the code lately enacted by the Genesee Conference, of which we shall take farther notice hereafter.

But, while the specification does not sustain the charge, as we have seen, the evidence does not sustain the specification. That the accused labored more or less upon territory lying between him and his neighbor, but claimed by neither as a part of his original charge, was not denied.—But what harm was there in all that? Has it come to this, that we are forbidden to take up new ground, in pal-

pable contravention of our whole history and mission as an itinerant ministry, simply for the reason that some jealous, snarling "dog in the manger," refuses to allow us to eat the hay which he will not eat himself? O, what a crime to follow in the footsteps of our early fathers of the itinerancy, by "going out into the highways and hedges;" and who that is spiritually-minded among us—having the work of the ministry at heart, and feeling more pleasure in seeking after "the lost sheep" of the house of Israel among the mountains, than in carousing at beer saloons, mingling in the midnight revel, or persecuting his brethren for their superior piety—has not been guilty of it?—Are all these to be excommunicated, therefore? We will attend to the circumstances of the forbidding these brethren to pass over their ordinary bounds, by their superiors, in another connection.

4. "Specification: "The circulating a certain pamphlet which had been interdicted by the Conference."

Here again the charge of contumacy falls to the ground, as there was no evidence to sustain the specification on which it was predicated. It was, to be sure, testified by a solitary individual, that the accused left a package of the pamphlet with some person; but, to say nothing of the neutralizing effect of his own counter-statement on the subject, his uncorroborated testimony was entirely canceled by the denial of the accused. And yet, evidence or no evidence, the victim had been seized; and the consequence of a crime he had never committed, and the penalty of a law he had never violated, must be visited upon him by his conscientious brethren. Another indication this, of a predetermination to sacrifice brethren against whom no charge or specification of crime could be sustained. How wonderful that a *Bishop* should have been there, consenting! If Pilate, a heathen ruler, who presided at the mock trial of the Saviour, had been in his

place, would he not have washed his hands, and said, "take ye these men and crucify them, for I find no fault in them"?

We have now given the substance of "the head and front of the offending" of the expelled brethren—the substance of the charges and specifications brought against them, and the nominal evidence on which they were turned out of the church—and the community will judge for themselves of the character of the administration in the premises. For ourselves, we are deeply mortified and grieved, that any of our brethren—great or small, preachers or people—should have been arrested and expelled from the church, on such grounds; and we have been led to ask, Who among us would have escaped with so little to tarnish our reputation, or lay us open to Disciplinary pains and penalties, if watched and pursued for so great a length of time by those with whom we were on terms of familiar intercourse? Surely, our church-membership must be held by the most precarious tenure, when we have reached the crisis in the administration of Discipline where it may be taken from us on the ground of party issues, rather than upon that of the evidence of guilt!

Having shown that the charges against the preachers lately expelled from the Genesee Conference, as reported in the *Northern Christian Advocate*, involved no cause of action; we shall now proceed to inquire, taking the same official report for our guide, by what means their expulsion was effected. And if, in the course of this investigation, the court should be found to have deserved the penalty which they inflicted upon the accused—while the latter were fully vindicated from the slightest imputation of guilt—the responsibility will rest, not upon us, but upon the Conference who constituted the court, or their reporter. But by what means were several of the most able and devoted members of the Conference, against whom no

charge of crime or impropriety even, could be established, expelled from the Methodist Episcopal Church?

As a basis of action in the premises, the Conference proceeded to pass a set of laws, which, to save appearance, they denominated "resolutions." This was the first step in the programme. And, being preparatory to the series of trials which was to follow, it is not surprising that it should be found to correspond in its character and bearing to the object to be gained by its adoption. It was but reasonable to expect that unwarrantable ends would be sought to be brought about by unwarrantable measures; and hence the extraordinary course pursued by the Genesee Conference in the trial and expulsion of the brethren in question. We pretend not to judge of the motives of the Conference. We are afraid they were not the best, however. But be that as it may, their course of action in the trials alluded to, was most egregiously wrong; and we scruple not to take issue with them in regard to it, particularly as it relates to their law-making assumptions, for the following reasons:

1. To assume the law-making power was a high-handed usurpation; for they were not a legislative body, and had no right to pass laws of any kind, much less of a judicial character. If it be said that the resolutions passed by the Conference upon the occasion, were not intended as *laws*; why, then, we would like to know, were they made a test of membership—the accused brethren being passed, or expelled, according to their conformity, or non-conformity? Either they were laws, or they were not. If they were, the Conference had no right to pass them. If they were not, they had no right to make them a test of membership. Let them take which horn of the dilemma they will, and they are impaled by their own action.

2. These Conference laws were substituted for the laws of the Discipline; as well in the final decision of the case

of the brethren accused, as in their examination, or trial. Hence it was that brethren, promising to obey the latter, were expelled nevertheless for declining to obey the former. This will be evident to any one who looks over the report of the trial and final disposition of the accused brethren.

3. These laws of the Conference were *ex post facto*, both in their character and effect; since they were of a character to be used, and were actually used, to exclude brethren from the church for "contumacy," in violating them before they were made.

4. They involved a pre-adjudication of the case of the accused brethren—a virtual condemnation of the individuals arraigned, in advance of their trial—thereby superseding the testimony of their witnesses, and of their pleadings before the Conference, in contravention of all law, and of all justice. The moment these laws were passed, the exclusion of the accused brethren from the Church was a foregone conclusion. What followed in the way of testimony, and of argument, and of law decisions, was a mere matter of form; saving the appearance of arbitrariness, somewhat, as it was doubtless intended to do, but having no influence whatever upon the final result.

5. These laws of the Genesee Conference very forcibly remind one of the fatal decree by which Daniel of old was cast into the lion's den. The princes and officers of the king entered into a foul conspiracy to destroy an innocent man. They were instigated to this abominable outrage by jealousy and hatred. They well knew that they could find no occasion against him, except by means of special legislation, or the passage of a law by which he could be convicted of "contumacy," and consigned to destruction for his fidelity to the cause of God. And all this in the spirit and style of fawning sycophancy towards their master, the king. How far the parallel between the courtiers

of the King of Babylon, and the creatures of the slave-power in the Genesee Conference, will hold, in respect to jealousy and hatred and conspiracy and special legislation and sycophancy toward a master—Darius in the one case, and the slave-power in the other—we leave the community to judge for themselves. Nor shall we undertake to say, whether the same terrible fate which overtook the conspirators of the former case, will be visited upon those of the latter, or not. God in his providence will see to that matter in his own time and way; and here we are content to leave the question.

But the programme of the Genesee Conference in relation to Roberts, Stiles, and others, was not fully carried out when these brethren had been barely expelled from the church: they must be pursued, especially by the official press, beyond her pale, and hunted down at every turn; as if they had no rights which anybody was bound to respect. It was not enough to deprive them of their ministerial character and standing and support, and of all the rights and privileges of church-membership which they counted so dear; their social position, their business prospects or means of a livelihood, and their claim to the common courtesies of life, must be undermined by a sort of mad-dog cry that has been sent abroad throughout the length and breadth of the land against them.

And why are these men thus pursued? What have they done that they should be shut out like a pack of outlaws, from the sympathy of human society? Expulsion from the church, even where it is deserved, *ought* to be penalty enough for any one. At any rate, it is all we are authorized to inflict. Beyond this point, we are to regard the excluded member "as a heathen man, and a publican;" i. e., as any common sinner, who is still entitled to our sympathies, our prayers and our instructions. Pursuing excommunicated members beyond the pale of the church,

is diabolically malicious—a course which none but the emissaries of the old murderer is ever known to follow.—The expulsion of an offender from the church where he has *merited* such punishment, is all right and proper. It is the “delivering him to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the soul may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus ;” but the calling him names, or casting a slur upon his character, and laboring to crush him to death, after he has suffered the highest penalty we are authorized to inflict upon him, in being cut off from our communion, is to “deliver him to Satan for the destruction of the” *soul*, and to join our efforts with those of his infernal majesty to effect this most devilish object.

We have said that to pursue these Genesee excommunicates beyond the pale of the church, was palpably malicious; and so it is. But this is not the only motive-power by which the pursuing party are driven on in their career of cruelty and abuse. They are afraid of the light, and must needs extinguish the last flickering ray that shines upon their dark deeds. If the brethren are left with any reputation for truth and veracity, the account they give of the manner in which they have been treated by the Conference, will be believed; and then there will be “death in the pot.” The sympathies of the community will be turned in their favor—the advantages of position and of power be thrown into their hands by the popular will—and the expelling party degraded to the condition in which they have sought to place the expelled. Thus would Haman be hung upon the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai.

It is this terrible retribution they so much fear. And how are they to provide against it? The answer seems to be,—“If we let [these expelled brethren] thus alone, all men will believe on them: and the Romans shall come, and take away both our place and nation.” “By this

craft we have our wealth." "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." So these men, it would seem, are not to be let alone. They have offended against a clique or party; nay, against the slave power; and they must be put down—must be immolated upon the altar of church-saving; and the church and community be put upon their guard, and made to look upon them as fanatics, as heretics, as madmen, with whom it would be dangerous to have anything to do.

But how is all this to be done? is the question. What plan is to be contrived—what method employed—to effect an object so desirable, and yet so difficult? Why, the friends of the oligarchy,—“the tools to do it with,”—are all on hand. “Report, say they, and we will report.”—But among these “tools,” none can be relied on to do the same efficient service in this line with the official press.—The facilities of this “tool” for gathering up and scattering over the land, the scavenger-sweepings of slander and detraction which await its call in respect to the expelled brethren, places it in the highest requisition by the party controlling it; and we are not surprised that they should have the address to turn it to their account. We should naturally look for them to give to the public “the judicial history of these men;” accompanying it with such annotations and reflections as would go to prejudice their cause with the General Conference, and forestall the successful prosecution of their appeal before that body—shutting them out from the sympathies of the community, and the openings of business life, at the same time, and ruining them forever in respect to their social position.

And we should look, too, for the tyrannical expulsion of brethren whose only crime consisted in their peculiar devotion to the cause of God and humanity, to be followed by that crowning act of tyranny—the interdiction of the freedom of the press! The *Northern Independent*—the

only religious paper among us that dare open its mouth for the oppressed, and expose the stygian villany of the oppressor—must be strangled, or forced out of circulation by an official decree; and the flood-gates of a popular religion be hoisted over our heads. All this must be done. The free press must be silenced, and the official organs of the church alone be allowed to represent the doings of her “chief ministers,” or her proscribed children, and their proscribed cause, will survive the storm of persecution that is raging about them, and their persecutors and oppressors be consigned to merited infamy and contempt.—O, cursed slave power! What hast thou done? A handful of piratical slave-holders at the South have gone on, increasing their exactions, and multiplying their encroachments upon the North, till their career of despotism and villany has culminated in the foulest treason. They must now possess the absolute control of the government—filling all its offices, and sharing all its emoluments—or “dissolve the Union.” And so with the church. A miserable minority—corresponding to that of the State—must “have the pre-eminence in all things;” monopolizing every post of honor and profit at our disposal; nay, must “rule or ruin.”

The prediction we uttered more than three years ago, that the freedom of the press would, ere long, be interdicted among us by church authority, has already become history. “The decree has gone forth.” The *Independent* is put under the ban—put upon the “*index expurgatorius*”—and the charge and penalty of “contumacy,” preparatory to which this Conference legislation was had, will henceforth be visited upon all who presume to disregard the unauthorized enactment. How truly Babylonian the stratagem here concocted! A law is passed which it was understood no genuine Christian, or man of common integrity even, could obey; on purpose, no doubt, to pro-

voke the commission of the Popish crime of "contumacy;" and thereby furnish an occasion for the expulsion of those faithful, praying ones, who could neither be persuaded to cease their denunciation of popular sins, nor driven into secession.

We now come to consider the part which the presiding Bishop took in the late famous trials of the Genesee Conference. To pass him by, and go into a critique on the proceedings of the Conference in the premises, would be disrespectful to him; and this will never do, though it were barely on account of the office he occupies.

The simple reading over the report of the administration of the Bishop in regard to the aforesaid trials, sufficiently evinces his unfortunate leanings to the side of the prosecuting party. *Prima facie* evidence of his co-operation with the friends and advocates of Border-churchism, is thought to be strikingly manifest in every position he takes; and not a few are of opinion that his strange ruling, more than anything else, contributed to the condemnation of the accused. At all events, there are some of his decisions and teachings which it would be difficult to account for, except upon the supposition that such was the result at which he aimed.

It is a well-established maxim in criminal jurisprudence, that "the judge is supposed to be on the side of the prisoner." A brief survey of a few of the multitudinous law decisions of the Bishop upon the occasion, will show how far he acted upon the principle of this maxim. If the fair reputation which had been previously accorded to him for impartiality and candor, do not suffer an almost total eclipse in the public estimation, by reason of his decisions and rulings in the case, we shall be happily disappointed.

1. In one instance he decides—the cause of "the Regency," as the prosecuting party were called, seeming to

require it—that the administration of a preacher, in respect to any matter falling within his appropriate jurisdiction, was *valid*, however *illegal* it might be; and that all were bound by it, till it should be set aside or corrected by the Annual Conference. Which was all right. But again he decides—the party interest having shifted grounds in this instance—that such administration was *invalid*; and that consequently no one was bound by it. Did the Bishop's memory fail him here? Had he forgotten the first decision, when he pronounced the second? Perhaps it may have been found a great convenience in the administration of justice, (?) to have one decision for “the Regency,” and another for “the Nazarites.”

2. He decides that the official board of a circuit or station, embracing the preacher in charge, may dissolve the connection of a church member with the church, in some cases, by simply declaring him withdrawn; even without his knowledge or consent. Well, this is the first intimation we ever had, that the official board constituted a branch of our ecclesiastical judiciary; or had aught to do with our membership in any way. We had always supposed that, with the exception of cases of removal by death, and of voluntary withdrawal, it required the action of “the society, or a select number of them,” to deprive us of our membership. And had we always been mistaken? If our membership lies in the hands of the official board, a majority of whose offices are in the gift of the preacher, it might as well lie in the hands of the preacher himself. And are we indeed dependent on the will of the preacher for our standing in the church? Is this Methodism?—Whether the Bishop intended to establish a precedent of the usurpation of absolute power on the part of the ministry by this decision: or to save the neck of a Regency brother, whose arbitrary exclusion of one of his charge required such a decision to cover it, may be difficult to tell

Possibly, this was deemed a fit occasion for placing the membership in absolute subjection to the ministry—as it could now be done, so far as the precedent of the Episcopal decision of a law-question was concerned—at the same time that the cause of a favorite party could be saved, and one of their number cleared of a charge which would have been adjudged sufficient to expel a poor Nazarite from the church.

3. He decided that the pastor, together with the official board, had the power to appoint all meetings. And, in another connection, that no meetings could be legally appointed for religious worship, except by the official board. Here again is the doctrine of centralization—the placing our religious exercises, as well as our membership, in the hands of the official board, a body that has nothing to do with either. That the official board, *as individuals*, and in some other *relations*, have more or less to do with our social duties and church-membership, is not denied; but nothing under heaven in the character of an official board. And we cannot see what good object the Bishop could have had for investing that board with so much authority, or clothing it with powers and prerogatives which the Discipline distributes to other functionaries of the church. Leaving the object of the Bishop out of the question, however, he has evidently committed two palpable errors here: the one, in making the power of the preacher to appoint religious meetings depend on the co-operation of the official board—he having the power to do it when and where he thinks proper, upon his own responsibility; the other in limiting that power to the official board—in connection with the preacher in charge, we suppose, though he does not say so—since local preachers and exhorters are authorized, not only by the very terms of their license or parchment, as the case may be, but by immemorial and universal custom, to appoint their own

meetings; and it has always been our practice to urge them out into the field, to labor for God and souls, wherever and whenever they could find an opening. And even class-leaders have been in the habit of appointing prayer-meetings for their own classes; and private individuals, male and female, in their own houses—"none daring to molest, or make them afraid." But now that the ukase of one of the junior Bishops has been issued on the subject, we must take care how we open our mouths in social prayer or praise, except at the *dictum* of the preacher in charge. And how long before this ghostly father will be authorized by another Episcopal decision, or an *official construction* of the one under consideration, to claim the absolute control of the family altar, and of the closet even, it is not for us to say. But, as things have gone on of late, it will not be a great while. And close upon the heels of such a stride, a little farther development of the power of the Bishop may teach us, that the pardon of our sins, and a passport to heaven, is to be sought at the hands of the priest!

4. He decided that all meetings, otherwise appointed than by the aforesaid authority, are "irregular;" and that a preacher has the right to suppress them, at his own discretion. But this decision covers a little too much ground for Protestantism—nay, for Christianity itself: for not only Wesley and Luther, but Christ and the apostles even, went largely into meetings of this description; and the churches raised up by them respectively, were the fruit of such meetings. If an English priest might have suppressed the meetings of Wesley, a Popish priest the meetings of Luther, and a Jewish priest the meetings of Christ and the apostles, in accordance with the decisions of the Bishop, what would have become of the living Christian Church ere this age of the world? Would the "regular order" of Judaism, or of Popery, or of English Churchism,

have sufficed to preserve it? Alas! for a Methodist Bishop, who condemns irregular meetings, when the very church over which he has been appointed to preside, owes her existence to them! Mrs. Susanna Wesley—the mother of our noble founder, and, indeed, of Methodism itself—held irregular meetings in her day; and her husband and pastor—a staunch old English clergyman—less intolerant than a Methodist Bishop, dare not take the responsibility of suppressing them at his own discretion. And who that has the fear of God before his eyes, would be willing to answer for such a deed at the bar of final judgment, though authorized to perpetrate the abomination by the decision of a thousand Bishops? If any of our ministers or members are guilty of crime—whether committed in meeting or out of meeting—in meeting regular, or irregular—let them be called to account for it. But for heaven's sake, let none of us ever molest any one for going into religious meetings to worship God, and get souls converted and saved, simply because they are “irregular.” This substituting the letter for the spirit—the order and authority of the church for the life and power of religion—has always marked the decline of the Church: always been the precursor and means of her downfall. It seems to us high time that we ponder these historic facts, when the faithful are being excluded from our fellowship for no other crime than the seeking spiritual food—independently of that unscriptural church-order which restricts them to the husks of a cold and heartless formalism.

5. Another decision was, that members on trial could not be appointed to any official station, or licensed to exhort. Where's the Discipline for this? The usage has always been otherwise. We should like to know whether St. Paul stood out a six months' probation, and was received into full membership, before he was licensed to exhort. But the object of this decision evidently was, to

pave the way for the condemnation of Stiles and others for recognizing Roberts and McCreery as exhorters before their term of probation had expired. Admitting, however, that the licensing these probationers to exhort *were* illegal, it was *valid*, nevertheless; and all were bound by it, for the time being; according to the Bishop's own previous decision. Why then should brethren be condemned for associating with them as public laborers? To have refused to recognize these brethren as exhorters—coming to them as they did, with a valid license in their hands—would have been to usurp the prerogative of the Annual Conference, and to nullify the valid administration of a co-ordinate authority. And in that case, there would have been ample cause of action against them; and they might have been justly convicted of “contumacy,” or some equivalent offense, upon good and sufficient grounds. But as it was, they were condemned and punished for doing their duty—condemned and punished for obeying the laws of the church! Did the cause of the pro-slavery Regency require this barbarous immolation of the innocent, and the good?

6. The only remaining decision of the Bishop we shall notice in this review, was, that no preacher had a right to drop or take up an appointment, without authority from his superior officer. This doctrine seems a little too stringent for the meridian of our itinerant, “go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature,” system. We should think, from Part I., chap. IV., sec. XIII., of Dis., that a *subordinate* preacher had *some* discretion in the premises. At any rate, he has always exercised more or less in respect to things of this kind; particularly in pioneer times, and large districts, where he seldom could see “his superior officer;” and we never knew any fuss to be made about it before. Nor can we suppress the belief, so universally entertained, that it was not the interest

of the *Church*, but of a *party*, which blew up such a terrible flame on the subject at the late session of the Genesee Conference. The reference the Bishop makes to the General Conference in support of his decision here, seems to us rather dubious. We wish he had *quoted* his authority; or, at least, told us where to find it. And even then, we should have been much better pleased if he had read us a passage from the Discipline.

But if it be so great a crime for a preacher to enlarge the sphere of his activities "without authority from his superior officer," what shall we think of an officer of the Genesee Conference, leaving his prescribed field of labor for a considerable portion of the time; drawing his full salary from the Book Concern meanwhile: and filling another charge, beyond his appointed limits, at the compensation of a thousand dollars more? What, we ask, shall we think of all this? Or of his making the tour of Europe—still enjoying the same fat salary, as we are told—while others are paid from the Book Room for supplying his lack of service at home? What "superior officer" has authorized him to do all these things? Were the laws of the Genesee Conference, with their accompanying interpretations and decisions by the Chair, applied to him, who does not see the result? And why, we would ask the Bishop, why should they not be so applied? Why "make flesh of one, and fish of another"? There are doubtless some hundreds among the ministry, who could poorly abide such test; nor can we tell how the Bishop himself would contrive to escape, for he, too, as we understand the case, ventured "off the limits," and wandered away to the Holy Land, "without authority from his superior officer." "Thou, therefore, that teachest another, teachest thou thyself? Thou that teachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonorest thou God?" The

difference between the two cases arising from the circumstance of the Genesee brethren being forbidden to go abroad, or enter upon new ground by "their superior officers," amounts to nothing; since this forbidding, as it would seem from the testimony in the case, was the effect, not of right or necessity, but of a mean and miserable party jealousy; and was designed to involve them in the sin (?) of "contumacy," which it was foreseen their consciences and their manhood would impel them to commit.

But though this review of the extraordinary proceedings of the Genesee Conference, and of the still more extraordinary course of the presiding Bishop, in relation to the Church trials by which their late session was distinguished, might be readily expanded into a volume, embracing, as they do, a number of questions of vital importance to our ecclesiastical jurisprudence: yet we must dismiss the subject, for the present at least, with a cursory examination of one single point farther. And what do you think it is? It is not the recognition of the famous five resolutions of the Conference on the part of the Bishop, as so many laws, and his examination of the accused in reference to these Conference statutes, instead of making the Discipline his ultimate authority; nor the "warning" these brethren "as their chief pastor," to abstain from any farther attendance upon irregular meetings, and the like, to which we refer. No: nor yet the peremptory ordering of brethren, as wise and as good, to say the least, as himself, to leave a camp-meeting where scores were being converted to God, and made holy, on pain of arraignment before the church for the enormous crime of engaging in Divine worship *irregularly*. All these points, in relation to Episcopal Geneseism, though sufficiently humiliating and offensive, we propose to pass over without comment: a bare reference to them being sufficient to stamp them with merited condemnation and scorn.

The point to be examined before we take leave of the Genesee administration, and which, by the way, involves the very gist, or principle, of the last-named particular, is neither less nor more than the right of private judgment on the part of the body of the ministry. A right on which the Bishop descants, having placed his official negation upon it, with so much arrogance and pertinacity.

A surrender of the right of private judgment, as Methodist preachers, is now claimed at our hands. It was contended by the Bishop, in connection with the Genesee trials, that we had already made it, in becoming members of the Conference; and he was greatly surprised, as if some new thing had happened under the sun, that any of the inferior ministry should presume to assert, or exercise such right in the very face of the vows they had solemnly taken upon themselves at their ordination. From the tone of the annunciations of the Bishop and of the official press, with respect to this right—the spirit in which they dogmatize about law and order, judicial decisions and church authority—and the everlasting changes wrung upon the twelfth “rule for the conduct of preachers,” as by the preachers of the South upon “servants obey your masters,” and the like; we would seem to have become transubstantiated into the very Church of Rome, where the inferior clergy, as well as the people, are all swallowed up—faith, conscience, private judgment, and all—in the infallibility of the Pope.

That we have surrendered “our own *will*”—not our private judgment, but “our own *will*” to those who have the rule over us,” is not denied. But even this surrender of “our *will*,” is far from being absolute. It is both limited in its nature, and conditional in its exercise. Limited to those things in which “our superiors” have a right to command us, and conditioned upon the contingency of the righteousness of their commands. It is worse than idle

for them to attempt to control us in things beyond their legitimate jurisdiction, while they themselves are playing the tyrant at our expense. The obligation between us is *mutual*; the same as between parents and children; the relative duty of the one, depending on that of the other. Children, to be sure, are commanded to “obey their parents in *all things* ;” but it is only in those things, after all, in which parents have a right to command them—and, to obey them *always*, i. e., whenever the command is just and proper. So in regard to “our chief ministers ;” we are required to obey them, it is true, but only so far as they are authorized to command us, and their commands are in accordance with the Discipline and the Word of God.—In both cases, as the authority of the governing party to command ceases the moment they go beyond these bounds, so the obligation of the governed to obey ceases precisely at the same point.

We most cheerfully acknowledge, that obedience to the “*godly* admonitions and judgments” of our bishops is *obligatory* upon us. At the same time, we are not only not bound to obey their *ungodly* “admonitions and judgments,” but we are bound *not* to obey them. And it is both our right, and our duty to discriminate as to what is godly, and what ungodly, in the exercise of our own private judgment. We claim the right of private judgment as our own. It is inalienable—a right we never have surrendered, and never will. It is indeed our birth-right; belonging essentially to our moral being—our accountability to God—and to Him alone are we responsible for its due and proper exercise. To surrender it to man, whether bishop, pope, or “Mother Church” even, would be treason against God our Saviour, who has placed it beyond the control of any but ourselves—requiring us to exercise it, in subordination to His will alone, upon our everlasting peril. If the attempt to compel us to surrender this right

to "our superior officers" be persisted in, we wish it to be understood that we believe in passive resistance: a glorious illustration of which we have in the history of Daniel and James, and John, and Luther, and Wesley, and all the holy martyrs; and we will never do wrong in obedience to any authority. We shall follow the impulsions of our own untrammelled consciences—the decisions of our own private judgments, if the bishop please—and, if called to it in the order of Divine Providence, shall not hesitate to "resist unto blood, striving against sin."

CHAPTER VII.

UPON the expulsion of Mr. Roberts from the Church, he took an appeal to the General Conference; and pending the appeal—a period of about two years—the spirit of persecution, already inflamed against the so-called Nazarites, became rampant, and burst forth with a violence which threatened their universal and speedy extirpation. The madness of Saul of Tarsus in persecuting the saints of his time, even unto strange cities, scarcely exceeded the rage with which the living portion of the Church were hunted down by the secret-society, worldly-minded, apostate majority of the Conference during this period. The truly faithful, without respect to age, sex, or condition, were brought before inquisitorial committees; and large numbers, lay and clerical, were hustled out of the Church in some way, or forced into the leading-strings of the dominant party. It was, indeed, a reign of terror. Ridicule, disfranchisement, sham trial, and various other contrivances, well known to the order of Jesuits, were put under contribution for the crushing out of the life and power of religion; and wide-spread desolation, as the result of these outrageous persecutions, were seen to pervade the Conference throughout all its borders.

We shall here present two several extracts: the one from the *Buffalo Advocate*—the organ of the Genesee Conference—and the other from the Minutes of the Conference itself; fully confirming what we have said above in regard to the condition of the Church, by her own acknowledgment. The first of these extracts is furnished by

Rev. Wm. Hart; the other by Rev. Wm. Hosmer—each accompanying his own extract, respectively, with appropriate remarks. We give both the extracts and the remarks, just as they came into our hands. They will speak for themselves.

Mr. Hart says: “The following deplorable state of religious feeling and interest, we find copied into the *Advocate and Journal* of March 10th, from the *Buffalo Advocate*, as follows:

“‘*BUFFALO.*—The *Advocate*, in an article headed, “Religious Interest in Buffalo,” says: We have none; we have no more than is usual through the year. We do not intend to convey the idea, by the above heading, that there is any special movement among us, or that there are any very marked efforts toward getting souls converted, or keeping those converted who are already in the Church. The great movement among us, is, we judge, to determine how far the Church can go back to the world, and save its semblance to piety, devotion and truth. Hence many, many Church-members, have become the most frivolous and pleasure-loving and folly-taking part of our town’s-people. They love, give and sustain the most popular worldly amusements, such as dancing-parties, card-parties, drinking parties, masquerade and surprise-parties, and have no disposition to come out from the world, and to be separate from it. All this may be seen, read and known, in more or less of the Buffalo Churches.’

“Now the question is,” proceeds Mr. Hart, “are these charges true or false? If false, is the *Advocate* aware what it costs to slander the Church in these days? It saw a couple of men beheaded for an offence which dwindles into superlative insignificance, when compared with these wholesale charges. Let us look at them:

“1st. No effort towards getting souls converted.

“2nd. No effort to keep souls converted.

"3d. 'The great movement,' 'the marked effort,' is to gain a position where they can just balance between God and the devil.

"4th. The Church members are frivolous, folly-loving and pleasure-taking, *even more so* than those who are openly in 'the way to hell.'

"5th. They love, give and sustain dancing-parties, card-parties, and drinking parties, &c., and have no disposition to do otherwise.

"These are the charges; now for the testimony. Br. Robie called: "Are the above charges true respecting the Churches in Buffalo?"

"Ans. 'All this may be seen, read and known, in more or less of the Buffalo Churches.'

"Dr. Stevens sends out these awful charges to his thousand of readers, on the simple assertion of the *Advocate*, without waiting to know the facts. How he has anathematized the *Northern Independent*, as villifying and slandering the Church; but since its commencement to the present day, where will we find anything to equal the above from Bro. Robie and Stevens? Now, if the above charges cannot be sustained, should not Bro. Robie be prosecuted for slandering the Buffalo Churches, and Dr. Stevens for 'publishing and circulating' slanderous reports? If they belonged to Genesee Conference, and were charged with abusing and slandering the Church, they would, ecclesiastically, be sent higher than Haman. In Genesee Conference, the above extract from the *Advocate*, would be considered as slanderous, whether true or false. So, Messrs. Editors, you had better take care. What was Bro's. Roberts' and McCrery's fault, compared with yours? Where or when have these brethren ever said anything half as severe as this from the *Advocate*.

"But if what Br. Robie writes be true, why all this hue and cry against the so-called Nazarites? The same un-

godly influences, and the same proneness to comply with them, exists in other places as well as in Buffalo. — And would it be strange if like causes produced results like those now being experienced by the Churches in Buffalo? The same state of things narrated by the *Advocate*, has and does exist in other places. The temptations of the devil have been listened to, and the prayer-meeting has given way to the social party; entire consecration has died, and the spirit of compromise between the Church and world obtains; formality and indifference respecting the salvation of souls, have taken the place of spirituality and the love which ‘constrains to seek the wandering souls of men.’

“To counteract these effects, a few faithful souls stood up for Jesus, and like the Hebrew children, declared that they would not fall down and worship the worldly gods which those ‘frivolous, folly-loving and pleasure-taking members’ and ministers were setting up. This, as everybody knows, that knows anything about it, was the origin of Nazaritism. The natural antagonism between sin and holiness has caused all the trouble. While the current flows along, as Br. Robie says it does in Buffalo, and nobody stands up for Jesus and proclaims the whole truth, they will have peace and prosperity; but it will be the peace of death, and the prosperity of those ‘whose eyes stand out with fatness.’

“If Br. Robie would stand out as an uncompromising exponent of the whole truth, and in the might of the Spirit, bear a decided and open testimony against all the worldly connections and associations that are cursing the Churches in Buffalo, he would see such a commotion and storm of opposition, as has been seen and felt in other places. But glory to God, souls would be awakened and saved. Then would commence the work of persecution; for, as ‘he that was born after the flesh, persecuted Him

that was born after the Spirit, *even so it is now.*" If Br. Robie would take this position with an eye single to the glory of God, and seek to root out dead formality, by a living, earnest Christianity, and make "special efforts" for the conversion of sinners, he would be to all intents and purposes a Nazarite. Will Br. Robie take this stand, and see and feel the salvation of God, or will he let the Buffalo Churches drift down to everlasting woe, unwarned, he following in their wake? WM. HART.

Mr. Hosmer says:—"A copy of the Minutes of the last session of this [Genesee] Conference, lies upon our table. Its mechanical execution is excellent, and reflects credit upon all concerned. With the matter in general, we are equally pleased. Each page, if we except the account of the 'Conference Camp-meeting,' bears marks of diligence and candor. But what strikes us most, is the report on the 'State of the Work.' It is able, pungent, truthful, humiliating. Yet it would have been more so, had all the facts of the case come out. Their language of confession wants translating, and then it would read much like the following:

" 'They said one to another, we are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear: therefore is this distress come upon us.' And Reuben answered them saying, Spake I not unto you, saying, 'Do not sin against the child, and ye would not hear? Wherefore behold also his blood is required.'—Gen. xlii, 21, 22.

"But let us have their own statement of the sad condition of affairs in a Conference from which all traces of Naziritism and 'Contumacy' have been carefully excluded. As this purgation has been eminently expensive to common sense, moral principle, and Methodist Discipline, one would suppose that it might have been prolific of mere

numbers and of a certain kind of self-respect. Yet even in these poor results it fails, and hence they say :

“1. ‘Our revivals have not been, either in number or extent, what we desired, or had reason to expect. Are we God’s ministers, commissioned and sent forth by the Great Head of the Church, to win souls to Christ, and must we, in so many instances, pass on, year after year, with no more marked results? Are we doing our whole duty, as preachers of the everlasting Gospel, while the years go by, and that Gospel seems essentially powerless in our ministrations? While we are the appointed guardians of the churches, must we, of necessity, see them moving on to inevitable extinction? This is not God’s will. The fault lies, in part, at least, at our own doors. There is, on the part of many of us, cause for profound humiliation before God, and for the most serious inquiry whether we are not essentially failing of the great ends of our ministry.

“2. ‘Another unfavorable feature in our condition is the fact, that in many, perhaps in most of our churches, the membership is made up, almost wholly, of persons far advanced in life. We see among them very few of the young. In a large portion of our churches, we rarely find a young man in the Official Board. This indicates a lamentable want of extensive revivals among us, for the PAST TEN YEARS. These aged persons in our churches are true and faithful, and worthy of all honor. But they will soon pass to the church triumphant. There are, perhaps, scores of churches in our Conference, the very existence of which seems to depend on the lives of one, two or three men now far advanced in years. These men are rapidly passing away. It is obvious that, in many places, nothing can save our cause but powerful and far-reaching revivals of religion.

“‘Another very great evil among us, and one fraught

with most damaging results to God's cause and all our interests as a Conference, is the engaging in secular pursuits by so many of our ministers. This evil, during the past two years, has been largely on the increase. It is needless to spend time to show the error of a practice so obviously contrary to both the spirit and letter of our commission, and of our ministerial vows. We claim to have obeyed the voice of the Master, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature," at the altars of the church. In the presence of God and man we have solemnly pledged to be men of one work, and how can we, conscientiously, engage in occupations that must divide our interest, energies, time and affections. This practice is alarmingly shaking the confidence of the people in us, as ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ. They say we are as greedy of gain, as covetous of large possessions, as easily swept into wild speculations as any other class of men. This loss of confidence in the ministry is not confined to those alone who engage in secular pursuits, but extends measurably to the whole body. Thus the innocent suffer with the guilty, and our hold upon the people is lost.'

"The chronology of the above is worthy of note, and we have marked it by putting the words in capitals. It is now almost ten years since that Conference arrested the character of one of its ablest and most useful ministers, and finally expelled him for slander—which slander consisted in writing an article for this paper, on 'New-School Methodism.' The article reflected pretty severely on some usages current in that and other Conferences, but was not one whit more scathing than this report on the 'State of the Church.' Its allegations indeed were not as broad, nor were its developments as alarming. A keen observer, however, at that time saw the evil in its incipency—saw a ministry shorn of its strength, secularized, unsuccessful,

and the church dying out—saw exactly what this official document declares began to exist ten years ago. The brave man whose eyes, anointed of God, saw this deplorable condition of the Genesee Conference, should have been rewarded by something better than expulsion, for he meant well, spoke well, and is now fully endorsed by the Conference itself. We saw the injustice done, saw it at the time it was done, and gave notice of the fact; but our words were then, they probably will be now, unheeded, and the Conference went on its way trying men for ‘Contumacy,’ and expelling such large numbers of their very best ministers and laymen, that absolute ecclesiastical annihilation stares them in the face. This result will surprise none. It is but the inevitable consequence of a wrong course. Had the leaders of that once prosperous section of the Church listened to good counsel they would not be uttering their *De profundis*, but their *Nunc dimittis*, and each valiant soldier of the cross, looking back over a well contested field could say, ‘I have fought a good fight.’

“Ten years of spiritual barrenness, the secularization of the ministry to such an extent that the people have lost confidence in them, and many other evidences of decline should satisfy the Conference that it has done wrong—that its administration has cast down those whom God has not cast down. By way of helping them out of their trouble, we suggest that the Conference at once reconsider its action in the case of all who have been expelled on mere technical grounds, and thus restore those on whose account God has sent leanness into all their borders.”—*Northern Independent*.

The following account of outrages perpetrated by the instigation of one of the Genesee Conference Preachers of the M. E. Church, was published in the *Niagara City*

Herald, of Oct. 8th, 1859. The writer is a gentleman of the highest respectability, and was an eye-witness of most of the proceedings :

“RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION.

“Outrages at Cayuga Creek—Methodists Hand-Cuffed and sent to Jail on the Sabbath.

“The days of persecution have returned. The spirit of the old inquisition is among us. Our informants, who are some of the most respectable citizens at Cayuga Creek, and wealthy gentleman, witnessed the strange spectacle of peaceable, devoted Christians, while quietly listening to the preaching of an aged and honored local preacher of the M. E. Church, being arrested, *hand-cuffed as felons, and hurried away to jail*, on charges manufactured for the purpose. We could hardly persuade ourselves we were residents of a free and enlightened country, in the 19th century. It would seem as if the wheel of time had rolled us back to the dark ages.

“The history of this outrage is briefly as follows : The Cayuga Creek Church forms a part of the Niagara Falls charge—the same preacher officiates at the Falls in the morning, and at the Creek in the afternoon of each Sabbath. Soon after Conference, the pastor went covertly to work to carry out the Anti Methodist doctrine of the ‘Pastoral Address,’ adopted by the stronger or ‘regency’ party of the Genesee Conference. The faithful and efficient Sabbath School Superintendent, and the Class Leaders were changed, and persons whom the pastor could use, were appointed.

“As soon as the term of office of one of the Trustees, a citizen of the highest respectability, and who had contributed liberally for the erection and support of the Church, expired, the preacher, in a quiet way, went to

work to get a person suitable for *his* purpose, elected in his place. He found one, who had never contributed either money or influence for building up the Church, and had him elected. No one suspected his ulterior designs, for he had been very smooth thus far, and no opposition was made. The Trustee thus supplanted was a warm personal friend of the preacher, but the preacher rightly supposed him to be too much of a man to be used as a 'tool' for any party.

"The key of the church, up to February 15th, had been in possession of A. M. Chesbrough, a Trustee, also, hitherto a warm personal friend of the preacher. Mr. C. always had the house open for meetings, furnished lights, and had paid more for building and supporting the church than any other man. Mr. Simpkins, the preacher, obtained the key and gave it to another Trustee, who is not a member of any Church, and who had been the chief agent of 'the regency' in these operations at Cayuga Creek. On the evening of the 16th of February, the Rev. John Cannon, who had been for over thirty years a local preacher, and for some twenty-three years a member of the M. E. Church at Niagara Falls, had an appointment to preach at Cayuga Creek. When the time arrived for opening the meeting, the house was well filled, and to the astonishment of all Mr. Simpkins, *who knew of the appointment*, stepped in and took the control of the meeting, without saying one word to Mr. Cannon. This created quite an excitement, for Mr. C. had preached there often, and is highly beloved.

"On the evening of the 23d of March, when the people met for prayer-meeting, the church was locked. Mr. Chesbrough going there between 7 and 8 o'clock, found them out of doors, and about to return to their homes, as the evening was cold. The key was away nearly one mile. For the first time since the church was built, the windows

were fastened down. Mr. Chesbrough pried open a window, the door was unbolted, and a meeting held. The Sabbath morning prayer meeting which had for some months been held at an unoccupied house in another neighborhood had been removed to the Church.

Mr. Simpkins called a meeting of the Trustees, two of which were under his influence. The question of opening the house for Sunday morning prayer meeting came up. One of the Trustees, and not a professor of religion, objected, that the "meetings were too noisy." The newly elected Trustee, said "the people could pray at home in their closets, or in their fields, that they did not need to come to Church to pray." The preacher said "as they had Sabbath School at 1 P. M., and preaching at 2 o'clock, and prayer meeting in the evening, that they did not need any other meeting on the Sabbath."

Mr. Chesbrough urged that the house should be opened for prayer meeting. From this time till the 17th of April, the meetings were held as usual,—on that day, Sabbath morning, the people met together at the Church for their customary prayer meeting. *One of the regency Trustees was posted outside the door with three or four hired men and dogs, to prevent the people from going into the Church.* Mr. Chesbrough asked him by what authority he closed the door? He said "by the authority of the preacher in charge, and a majority of the (two) Trustees." He also said, "he was sent to protect the door, and *was going to do it at all hazards.*" The people becoming disgusted, returned home. For four weeks no prayer meeting was held on Sabbath morning. Mr. Chesbrough visited the preacher twice to get his consent to have the house opened, which was refused each time, and the preacher said, that the Trustee who guarded the door "knew his wishes."

In the meanwhile the members became uneasy at having no meetings during the long Sabbath mornings, no relig-

ious services were held in the place save in the Methodist Church. And it was too far to go any where else. An appointment was given out for Father Cannon to preach on Sabbath morning, June 19th. Mr. Chesbrough having obtained a key opened the door. While he and two others were sitting in the Church waiting for the congregation, the new Trustee came up with another man and locked them in, and said "Mr. Cannon should not speak there, Mr. Simpkins told him to protect the door at all hazards." His comrade said "if there is any fighting to be done he wanted a hand in it." Mr. Cannon quietly held his meeting under a tree, and appointed another in two weeks. When the time came the regency Trustee was at the door with six or seven hired men, and said, "if they went into the Church that day, before the regular time, they would walk over his dead body." Again the meeting was held under the trees, and another appointment left for two weeks.

When that Sabbath morning came the regency Trustee, Samuel Tompkins, was posted at the door with eleven men—not one of them, save his brother, ever paid one cent towards the erection of the Church, and most of them hired men and boys, and five dogs. Seats placed beside the Church were torn down, and a line was marked out, over which the people were told they must not pass at their peril.

On the evening of the 28th of July, there was an appointment for a prayer meeting. Mr. Chesbrough had in the meantime put a new lock upon the door, and by his authority the Church was opened. Before the people had assembled, a hired man of the regency Trustee, stepped into the Church and fastened the door by putting a brace against it. The members assembled, but being told by the guard that they could not enter the Church, they quietly dispersed. When they had gone some fifty rods or more, some boys threw in a handful of fire-crackers

through a broken pane of glass at the man who was holding the door. On Saturday night as the regency guard were watching the Church, that they might have possession Sunday morning, they said two persons came up to the window and whispered, "there they lie near the door," and then broke some eight or ten panes of glass.

The probability is that it was done by some of the regency party, in order to make out as bad a story as would best suit their side, *for in fact, they did not even go to the door to see who was there breaking the windows.*

The regency Trustee obtained warrants of a Justice, a special friend, and business partner of his. They were kept through the week, and on Sabbath morning, Aug. 7th, as Rev. John Cannon was preaching in a grove, some four or five constables, armed with revolvers, clubs, and shackles, led on by the regency Trustee, came to the congregation, and arrested one of the members of the M. E. Church, and a respectable citizen. They then went to the house of another member, tore him from the bedside of a sick wife, took him near the meeting, and *hand-cuffed* him with the other. They were left *in irons* near the meeting until a part of the constables could go to the village and arrest some five or six more. They were *put in shackles* and then driven in the hot sun, through the dust about a mile. They were crowded into an old lumber wagon used for hauling brick, and hurried to jail. While they were kept near the meeting, some of the most responsible men in Niagara County offered to give any amount of security required; but nothing would answer—to jail they must go.

The preacher met them on the way to his appointment. Whether the sight of some of his members in irons gave him inspiration to preach we are unable to say. The form of an examination was gone through with, and though no evidence of guilt was adduced, yet the justice, to screen his friend, as is supposed, bound them over for trial.

Thus have our free institutions been disgraced by an act of religious persecution, that would be better befitting Italy or Rome. The Christians arrested are as quiet and inoffensive men as can be found. Their *real* offence consists in their unwillingness to put their conscience in the keeping of their pastor, and in their earnest endeavors to gain Heaven. In short, they are old fashioned Methodists, designated by their opposers in the Genesee Conference by the persecuted name of Nazarites."

If the foregoing does not remind the reader of the days of the Inquisition, it must be because he is not very conversant with the history of the Church of Rome. Even the civil arm, so often invoked by "His Holiness" for the extirpation of "heretics," was here called into requisition; and nothing saved these obnoxious disciples of Jesus from the martyr's stake, but the fear of trenching farther upon an outraged public opinion.

Another specimen of mobocratic, sham trials we propose to give, is from *The Olean Advertiser* of April 26th, 1860, and is as follows:

"METHODIST CHURCH DIFFICULTIES.

Solemn Mockery of a Trial—Ecclesiastical Guillotine on the neck of Seymour J. Noble!

MR. EDITOR:—After your very appropriate remarks and suggestions upon this trial, it might perhaps, by some, be thought advisable to allow this matter to rest without farther comment. But there are some features of the case that demand the attention of the public, and which concern every man who has a reputation that he would preserve, and place beyond the reach of injury, from such assaults and with such means as were employed in this case.

By a curious coincidence, or perhaps by design, the day designated from time immemorial as 'hangman's day,' was the period specially set apart for this *appearance* of a

trial, and for the doing of a deed, which, freed from the associations of this, would have been singularly inappropriate. On Friday, April 6th, at nine A. M., the component parts of an inquisitorial court were assembled in due order, in the basement of the Church edifice.* The judge appeared, solemnly grave. The minister in charge seemed complacently satisfied as he viewed the arrangements, and the jury expressed '*certain conviction*' in their countenances, as they eyed the accused, standing before them, conscious of his own rectitude, and surrounded by his many friends and sympathizers. .

A hymn was read in slow and measured terms. It was a hymn which had been so often sung by earnest Methodists.

' A charge to keep, I have,
A God to glorify.'

A few feeble voices carried it to its close. It seemed strangely inappropriate to us, and most of those collected there—save the Court—indulged in the same feeling. Alas! they were too sad for song, and only waited the inevitable consummation of the wrong they were unable to avert.

Then, all kneeled in prayer, while the Rev. Mr. Hammond, of Portville, who was to preside as Judge, supplicated the Throne of Grace, for wisdom from on high, to direct aright the duties imposed upon him; and as the words—'let no act stand in the way of salvation of souls,' broke in upon the silence, one long, loud, earnest amen was the response, bursting involuntary as it were, from the lips of their kneeling victim of their displeasure.

The religious exercises being closed, the inquisitorial character of the Court began to develop itself by the Presiding Elder rising in his place, and going through the transparent farce of formally deposing W. C. Willing, from his official position as Pastor of the First Methodist

* The Methodist Episcopal Church at Olean, N. Y.

E. Church of Olean. No reason was given for this summary proceeding, but it was easy to conjecture why it was done. He had made out the charge, selected the judge, empannelled the jury, and summoned the witnesses, but there was as yet no prosecutor! The arrangement would not be complete, unless he performed the part of that functionary! The whole Court was the creature of his making, carefully selected and brought together for the arrangement, trial, and *certain* expulsion of one of the members of the M. E. Church. He had done all he could in his *official* position without infringement upon the 'Discipline,' and hence this 'deposition' to enable him to do, what no lay member of the whole society was willing to perform--prosecute SEYMOUR J. NOBLES, on the charge of 'IMMORAL AND UNCHRISTIAN CONDUCT!!!'

Mr. Noble, plead a general denial, and requested the court to allow him the assistance of Wm. Culver and Doctor Bigelow as counsel.

The *Court* decided the latter gentleman would not be permitted to take part in the trial, as he was not a member of the society.

Dr. Bigelow arose from his seat in a retired part of of the room, and said 'it was unnecessary to make any ruling so far as he was concerned, for before *such* a court he should be like a 'sheep dumb before its shearers.'

Mr. Noble objected to W. C. Willing acting as prosecutor, on the ground of his not belonging to the society.

The *Court*, with a distinction so delicate as to make the difference not discernable to ordinary minds, ruled precisely the reverse of its last decision, and W. C. Willing was allowed to act.

Mr. Noble objected to Hiram Webster sitting as one of the jurors, for having said 'he would not believe a Nazarene any quicker than he would the devil.' He called one witness who testified to Webster's assertion, and offered to

bring more, telling the court, that in his defence he would have to rely upon the testimony of those stigmatized as Nazarites, and if men were to sit upon the jury, who would not believe them quicker than they would the 'father of all lies,' it looked to him as if the case was already pre-judged.

The *Court*, with a coolness challenging precedent, very blandly decided Mr. Webster competent.

Upon the declaration of this decision, the accused, acting under the impression very naturally made upon him, held the court for half an hour, with an earnest, heart-felt speech; telling them that he could hope for no justice at their hands—that this trial was decided upon long before the alleged consummation of the act for which he stood arraigned—that it was a foregone conclusion, he must be expelled from the church, and these forms and ceremonies were only designed as an outside show of justice. The flushed countenances, bowed heads, and averted faces of all connected with the court, told how pungently these scathing truths were realized.

When the accused had stepped from the threshold, his friends followed him, leaving the inquisition comparatively alone, it began its work, and with indecent haste, hurriedly consummated it. A few witnesses were hurriedly examined—the prosecutor hurriedly summed up the case—and the jury rendered a hurried verdict.

The verdict was precisely what it was intended it should be, and what every one conversant with the proceedings had very clearly foreseen, and SEYMOUR J. NOBLE,—a man whose heart and purse, for the last eighteen years, have been open to the requirements and necessities of the church—whose hard-earned substance during all that time has constantly flowed into her treasury, and whose prayers have been regularly offered up at her sacred altars; is pronounced by a foreign emissary, thirsting for the blood of

martyrs, as no longer deserving of association. Though his heart yearns for the church as the tender child for its mother, he is not allowed to bend the knee there, but is sent forth into the world with a stigma upon his name, and a reproach upon his Christian character.

In view of all this, may we not reasonably ask, of what value is human reputation, in a community, where such high-handed efforts to blast and destroy it can be successfully indulged? If *such* attacks upon private character can possibly injure the object aimed at, it shows the necessity of some legal enactment to protect honest men, from the operations of such machinery, and from the influence of a spirit, that in other countries and in other ages of the world, have sent men to the rack and to the scaffold, for alleged or suspected heresies.

But in this particular instance, and in this immediate community, the malice that originated these proceedings, and set them in motion, is comparatively impotent and harmless. Mr. Noble has lived here too long, is too well known, and his position as a sincere, earnest Christian, too well established to suffer any permanent injury from such persecutors. It may have some effect abroad, where the parties are unknown; but here, it is looked upon as a farce, and only injures those who have been engaged in the transaction. The charges do not in any way refer to any act of his, as a citizen, a man, or a Christian. In order to have a semblance of a charge against him, his accusers were compelled to fasten upon what has ever been regarded in all civilized communities, as a privileged proceeding. He was engaged as counsel for JAMES H. BROOKS, when arraigned before a similar tribunal, and defended him with a zeal and ability that before any other body of men, would not have been without a saving influence. In the excitement of debate, and the earnestness of his argument, he undoubtedly used strong expressions, and characterized the

proceedings as they deserved. It is for language used under such circumstances, that he has now been accused, arraigned and expelled from his church.

The ruling powers in the Methodist denomination, have by this act proclaimed, that no man can remain in their midst, who has the courage to assert his manhood and independence; and that no brother in the church, shall defend another accused of heresies, without subjecting himself to the risk of being also expelled, if he employs language that is offensive to the inquisition before which he appears. In all other tribunals, where men are charged with offences, the counsel who appears on behalf of the accused, is permitted to express his honest convictions of the case, in such terms as his judgment shall dictate; and he is nowhere, and under no circumstances, liable to be called to account, or even censured for a choice of adjectives that the case or the evidence may suggest. When a man joins the M. E. Church, is it to be understood that he surrenders all his rights and privileges in this respect, and if accused of offences, is the method of his trial, the character of the evidence he offers, and the language he employs in his vindication—all to be dictated and prescribed by those who may be constituted his judges? If this be so, it is well to let the community know it, that they may govern themselves accordingly.

Here, it is very generally conceded, that in the case of Messrs. Brooks and Noble, though guiltless of any offence against good order or good morals, in their expulsion from such a Church as has driven them forth, there is great consistency and propriety. They have no sympathy with the feeling and spirit that seems dominant in that body, and could not remain under the control of such rulers, without feeling that they were out of place, and there was something incongruous and wrong in attempting to subject their religious interests and their future and eter-

nal welfare, to the control of such influences. It is only in the hope, we apprehend, of freeing the church from such influences, that they would have any desire to remain there. In this hope they have the sympathy of all good men, and to-day, although deprived of their church connection, and cut off from her communion, they could not exchange places in the public estimation, with those who have heaped these wrongs upon them, without suffering loss far greater than that which they already have sustained."

Instances of administration, or persecution rather, like the foregoing, are now become the order of the day; and are shamefully gloried in, as the Church of Rome formerly gloried, and would still glory if the civil authority were out of the way, in the burning of heretics. It is a maxim, often demonstrated, that "where there is a will, there is a way," and the machinery for the execution of these deeds of darkness is being fabricated and brought into use with a facility that is quite equal to the growing demand of the church for such infernal appliances. But though her inventions, contrivances, and so-called improvements in this direction, are confessedly smart, and fully up to the character and spirit of the age in which we live; yet we see in them, after all, nothing else than a rapid approximation to the fire and blood of the sixteenth century, and tremble for the result! The Methodism of the M. E. Church at this day, is no more the Methodism of Asbury and Garrettson of seventy or eighty years ago; than the democracy of the pro-slavery copperheads of our time, is the democracy of Thomas Jefferson and the revolutionary fathers.

To say nothing of the laws of the constitution, or of the statute book, which are made little account of in our days; even the common law, by which we understand common sense and common justice, has become obsolete among us; and *special legislation*, ignoring the only proper basis of

law—equal justice and the common welfare—and looking solely to personal, or at least to party ends and interests, now rules the day. The Bible has now very little practical authority among us; nor do we at all insist upon the observance of the old Discipline which used to govern us in former times. But *churchism*, binding us to a denominational or party platform, and enforced by “Conference resolutions,” Episcopal decisions, the precedents of sham trials, and the like, arbitrarily administered, practically constitutes our grand and only authoritative system of ecclesiastical jurisprudence. Law, either constitutional, statutory, or *constructive*, may now be pleaded for almost any thing you choose to undertake; and courts, consisting of a Bishop as an independent tribunal, an “official board,” created and governed by “the preacher in charge,” or “a committee” in the character of a packed secret-society jury, may be resorted to for almost any verdict or decision you can make it their interest to render. Both laws and decisions, which it was seen the pious could not in conscience obey, are contrived up, as in the case of Daniel, who was given the alternative of idolatry or the lions’ den, on purpose to ensnare and destroy them.

The clergy, who constitute both the legislative and executive departments of the church, aware of their gross departure from God and Methodism, and the hopelessness of obtaining their support, on the voluntary principle, from a people who had lost all confidence in them as Christian Ministers, resolved upon coercive measures; and to ensure a support they could not otherwise receive, made it a condition of membership. This new law, introduced into the Discipline in so clandestine a manner as to leave the people unconscious, at least for a while, if not of its existence even, yet of its true import and bearing, was thenceforth to be regarded as a test of loyalty; its one great object being to compel the people to support the

preachers sent to them by the Conference, whatever their character might be; or in case of failure, to authorize the expulsion of all non-paying members.

But though the design of the law in question was concealed from the people by the ambiguous and indefinite terms in which it was couched, lest they should be alarmed at so bold and high-handed an encroachment upon their rights; it was by no means hidden from those a little more familiar with General Conference legislation for a while past. They saw at the time, and proclaimed it also, that in causing the collection of monies for Church purposes, on the part of the preachers, to enter into the examination of their character before the Conferences to which they respectively belonged; and requiring all coming into full connection as members of the Church, to promise and pledge themselves to support her institutions and ministry according to their ability; they saw, we say, from such legislation of the General Conference, that our character and membership were now to be determined by a money standard. And so it has come to pass.

Many have already been expelled from the Church—ostensibly for something else, but really for their neglect or refusal to support a Christless, persecuting ministry. Of late, however, the guise has been thrown off, and members have been expelled for the avowed reason that they declined to support the preacher who had been placed over them by the Conference. A single instance, communicated in the following letter, (copied below,) must here suffice:

“EAST OTTO, Cattaraugus, March 16th, 1867.

“DEAR BROTHER:—

“I was present when Bro. Stiles and others had their trials, and believed they were wickedly expelled. I had been a member of the Church for twenty-six years, and was strongly attached to her. But when I

saw the conduct of the Conference in expelling, as I believed, her very best ministers, I felt and said I could not receive such men as Gospel ministers, until I saw in them 'repentance, confession, and satisfactory reformation.' A. L. Chapin, sent to this circuit by the Brockport Conference of 1859, stated, in connection with his sermon, that 'he was told some of the Church would not receive him, nor pay him.' He said, also, 'there should not be one left in the Church at the close of the Conference year, that did not pay him, or that did not pay "the fifth collection."' He then requested me, as, class-leader, before sitting down from preaching, to see each member of my class, and report to the Quarterly Conference whether they would pay him or not. I called on each member, twenty-three of them, and each one told me they would not pay him; and the most of them said they would not hear him preach again. I reported accordingly to the Quarterly Conference; when he said, 'he would take up a labor with me and my class.' He did so. They all came to my house, and each one told him, as they had told me; upon which, four of us were notified to appear before 'a committee,' to answer for our sins. My trial came on first, and lasted all day. I admitted the charge to be true; and Chapin, after consultation with 'the committee,' reported that they found nothing against my moral or religious character, but a violation of our rules. Consequently, I was expelled from the Church.

Yours, truly,

"DEWEY TEFT."

We have now before us, taking in all the facts and incidents hitherto narrated in this work, a pretty full view of the means employed by the M. E. Church for "the extirpation of heretics:" *i. e.*, Nazarites, or whoever, under any title, bear the living image of Christ.

CHAPTER VIII.

WE shall now lay before our readers the proceedings of two large and very respectable Lay Conventions, that it may be seen how the people regarded the character and doings of the Genesee Conference during the period under consideration. These Conventions—the one held at Albion, December 1st and 2d, 1858, and the other at Olean, February 1st and 2d, 1860—were composed of *representative men*: all of them citizens of distinguished intelligence and piety, whose names and social position alone had great weight with the community—especially as they were gathered from every part of the Conference, and “knew personally what they said, and whereof they affirmed.”

As the doings of these Conventions speak for themselves, however,—as well in regard to the spirit of intelligence and candor which pervaded them, as to the facts and sentiments they exhibited—we shall here give the official report of said Conventions, respectively, without the alteration of a syllable. It will then be seen that the picture drawn of the Genesee Conference in the foregoing pages of this work, is not a mere caricature of that famous body—not the unmanly torture of some disaffected party or individual—but a faithful portraiture, taken from the very life.

These Conventions, let it be remembered, were not instigated by the outraged brethren whom envy had thrown out of the church; but were the spontaneous outbursts of popular indignation in behalf of the sufferers and their cause.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE LAYMEN'S CONVENTION,

Held at Albion, December 1st and 2d, 1858.

On Wednesday, pursuant to the notice in the call, the members of the Convention met in the M. E. Church at Albion, for the purpose of commencing the Convention with a Laymen's Love Feast. It was a season of much interest. At 8 1-2 P. M. the Love Feast was closed, and the Convention adjourned to Kingsland Hall, for the purpose of organizing.

The Convention was organized by the election of the following officers:

President.

ABNER I. WOOD, of Parma.

Vice Presidents.

I. M. CHESBROUGH, Pekin,	G. C. SHELDON, Allegany,
G. W. HOLMES, Kendall,	J. H. BROOKS, Olean,
S. C. SPRINGER, Gowanda,	GEO. BASCOM, Allegany,
C. SANDFORD, Perry.	

Secretaries.

S. K. J. CHESBROUGH, Pekin,	W. H. DOYLE, Youngstown,
J. A. LATTA, Brockport.	

Committee on Resolutions.

S. K. J. CHESBROUGH, Pekin,	S. S. RICE, Clarkson,
W. H. DOYLE, Youngstown,	JOHN BILLINGS, Wilson,
G. W. ESTES, Brockport,	A. AMES, Ridgeville,
J. HANDLY, Perry.	

Committee on Finance.

NELSON COE,	C. BRAINARD,	S. P. BRIGGS,
S. S. BRYANT,	GEO. HOLMES,	

The Convention was addressed by I. M. Chesbrough, Bro. Eckler, Bro. A. Castle, and S. K. J. Chesbrough.

On motion adjourned to 9 o'clock Thursday morning.

Thursday Morning.

Convention met at 9 A. M.—A. I. Wood in the chair.—
Convention opened with prayer by Alanson Reddy.

The following Call was then read :

GENESEE CONFERENCE LAYMEN'S CONVENTION.

There has been manifested, for several years past, a disposition among certain members of the Genesee Conference, to put down, under the name of fanaticism, and other opprobrious epithets, what we consider the life and power of our holy Christianity. In pursuance of this design, by reason of a combination entered into against them by certain preachers, the Rev. Isaac C. Kingsley, and Rev. Loren Stiles, Jr., were removed from the Cabinet at the Medina Conference ; and the last Conference at Perry, after a trial marked by unfairness and injustice, expelled from the Conference and the Church two of our beloved brethren—Benjamin T. Roberts, and Joseph McCreery, for no other reason, as we conceive, than that they were active and zealous ministers of our Lord Jesus Christ, and were in favor with the people, contending earnestly for those peculiarities of Methodism which have hitherto been essential for our success as a denomination ; and have also dropped from the Conference two worthy, pious and devoted young men, viz., Frank M. Warner, and Isaac Foster, who, during their Conference probation, approved themselves more than ordinarily acceptable and useful among the people ; and also, at the last session of the Conference, removed from the Cabinet Rev. C. D. Burlingham, the only remaining Presiding Elder who opposed their sway. For several years past they have also, by consummate "clerical diplomacy," removed many of our worthy members from official relation to the Church, for no other reason than that they approved of the principles advocated by these brethren.

Therefore, in view of these facts, and others of a similar

nature, we, the undersigned, hereby invite all our brethren who, with us, are opposed to this proscriptive policy, to meet with us in Convention at Albion, on Wednesday and Thursday, December 1st and 2d, to take such action and adopt such a course as the exigencies of the case may demand. Brethren, the time has come when we are to act with decision in this matter. The Convention will commence Wednesday evening, at 7 o'clock, by holding a laymen's love feast. We hope our brethren who are with us in this matter will attend.

PEKIN.—I. M. Chesbrough, R. Wilcox, J. S. Mitchell, J. B. Pike, G. P. Rose, S. K. J. Chesbrough, Geo. W. Carl, J. P. Raymond.

BROCKPORT.—J. A. Latta, Franklin Smith.

WEST CARLTON.—Jesse Murdock, Chester Williams, Alanson Reddy.

GOWANDA.—A. L. Chaffee, J. H. Chaffee, S. C. Springer, Nathan C. Cass, Titus Roberts, Wm. S. Smallwood.

NIAGARA FALLS.—I. F. Fairchild, Jr., D. B. Ingraham, John Cannon, Sr., J. H. Jones.

EAST CLARKSON.—S. S. Rice, Ashbel Tyler, John Shank, James M. Cusic, John Clow, George Marcellus, M. Moore, John Moore, David Hoy, John Hoy, Henry Rice, George W. Estes, Henry Moore, Henry W. Moore, Henry Fosmire, John Windust, A. Dual, Isaac Secor, Wm. P. Rice, Wm. H. Thompson, Daniel Sinclair.

SPENCERPORT.—I. B. Cottrell, Zenas Brice, Andrew Van Zile.

NORTH CHILI.—Thomas Hanna, John Emmons, Alexander Paten, Wm. Porter, Henry Smith, William Hutchins, Claudius Brainard, John Prue.

RIDGEVILLE.—Ulysses Hecox, H. E. Gregory, M. N. Downing, A. Ames, Henry Rickard, J. R. Hunt, T. Corliss, J. Corliss.

SOMERSET.—John Putnam.

ALBION.—J. R. Annis, N. Brown.

YOUNGSTOWN.—John Hutchinson, Christopher Quade, W. H. Doyle, Charles Quade, Daniel Baker, S. H. Baker, William Perry, Warren Baker, Andrew Andrews.

ALLEGANY.—George Bascom, G. C. Sheldon, W. C. Bockovan, H. Chamberlain, John D. Ellis, R. R. Eggleston, J. B. Freeland.

PERRY.—J. Stainton, T. B. Catton.

MIDDLEPORT.—Henry McClean, Isaac C. Vail, Charles Jackson, David Welch.

KENDALL.—G. W. Holmes, L. F. Halstead, Nelson Coe, G. W. Thomas, Amos Cowell, William Nobles, A. Wheeler.

CARYVILLE.—Darius King, John D. Stedman, Thomas Chappell, Edward Tuttle, William Galliford, Richard Galliford, Thomas Halway, M. D. Dailey, Richard Stevens, O. C. Allen, Lorenzo Torrey, John Isaac, William Manning, Richard Rice, Thomas Brierly, Ebenezer Hart.

SWEDEN.—Loren Hill, F. A. Ladue.

OLEAN.—Wm. P. Culver, T. V. Oviatt, F. Blackman, S. J. Noble, J. H. Brooks, R. A. Brooks, A. C. Brooks.

PARMA CENTRE.—A. B. Castle, A. I. Wood, C. A. Knox, B. Burritt, Peter Van Zile, D. A. Wellman, P. Curtis, Jr., J. Fowler, S. M. Woodruff, Fayette Wood, L. S. Bryan, George Curtis, I. Walker, Elias Curtis, P. Curtis, A. Garlock, James Ireland.

BURK HILL CHARGE.—Mark N. Velzy, Burton Patridge, George Coleman.

GAINESVILLE.—Hiram Parish, John Sherwood, Anson Card, Rufus Chamberlain, Elisha Brainard, George W. Humphreys.

After the reading of the call, the following persons gave in their names as Laymen, who fully endorsed the sentiments expressed in the Call, and who were present to act accordingly. One hundred and ninety-five responded.—Their names, and the respective charges to which they belong, are as follows:

<i>Buffalo—13th St.</i>	<i>West Falls.</i>	<i>Akron.</i>
Dr. J. A. Campbell.	L. Woods.	M. Osborn.
<i>Attica.</i>	<i>Lockport.</i>	<i>Batavia.</i>
C. R. Reynolds.	R. Abbey,	William Jones,
	J. H. Blosser,	George Wilson,
<i>Ridgeville.</i>	N. B. Shearer,	George Body,
Moses N. Downing,	Joseph Gatchell.	James McAlpine.
Ulysses R. Hecox,		
J. R. Hunt,	<i>Niagara Falls.</i>	<i>Byron.</i>
Anthony Ames.	D. B. Ingraham.	M. Andrews.

<i>Youngstown.</i>	<i>Yates.</i>	<i>Brockport.</i>
William H. Doyle.	H. DeLine,	J. A. Latta,
	S. Wood,	T. C. Cowen,
<i>Wilson.</i>	J. Lott,	A. Moore,
J. G. Robinson,	C. Johnson,	Franklin Smith,
A. Dailey,	Wm. H. Lott,	E. L. Shepard.
Albert Whitney,	Wm. Parsons,	
John Billings.	Isaac C. Parsons,	<i>Knowlesville.</i>
	A. Lott,	G. W. Furgerson,
<i>Charlotte and Olcott.</i>	J. Fuller,	O. L. Walters,
S. Post,	W. DeLine,	J. O. Brown.
C. Lewis,	George Clark.	
E. Eshbaugh.		<i>Albion.</i>
	<i>Medina.</i>	J. R. Annis,
<i>Allegany.</i>	J. G. Codd,	J. Whitney,
G. C. Sheldon.	J. M. Hills,	R. C. Van Antwerp
	J. Williams.	J. M. Brace,
<i>Gowanda</i>		E. W. Mott,
Titus Roberts,	<i>West Barre.</i>	W. Van Antwerp,
S. C. Springer,	Squire Burns,	Lewis Howe,
N. C. Cass.	Edward Parker,	C. B. Pierson,
	Hiram Snell,	Albert Benton,
<i>Sweden.</i>	R. M. Tinkham,	J. Hubbard,
Loren Hill,	J. Sanford.	M. L. Fuller,
T. S. LaDue,		N. F. Chapin,
C. S. LaDue,	<i>Millville.</i>	William Graham,
S. B. Saunders,	J. E. Castle,	M. H. Bronson,
John Cowen,	Watson Case,	S. M. Forbes,
A. Robinson,	B. E. Seaver.	C. Crandall,
C. L. Steves.		S. P. Briggs,
	<i>Alabama.</i>	M. A. Dunning,
<i>Clarkson.</i>	J. C. Vincent.	G. W. Woodard,
A. Deuel,		Benjamin Babcock,
S. S. Rice,	<i>LeRoy.</i>	A. H. Paine,
John Hoy,	R. Teasdale.	Alfred Hill,
David Hoy,		Henry Wilson,
Wilson Moore,	<i>Hulberton.</i>	James Graham,
John Windust,	E. W. Butterfield,	C. Babcock,
George W. Estes,	M. Terry,	D. E. Tyler,
John Shank,	R. Huff,	N. H. Brown,
Henry Moore.	Wm. Knight.	D. J. Braman.

Kendall.

N. Coe,
Amos Cowell,
Stephen Jencks
J. Higley,
N. S. Bennet,
William Noble,
Jesse Fountain,
Alfred Hornsby,
William Nichols,
G. W. Holmes,
L. F. Halstead,
A. N. Spears,
Robert Scott.

Parma.

A. I. Wood,
B. Burritt,
S. M. Woodruff,
P. Van Zile,
L. S. Bryan,
A. B. Castle,
Fayette Wood,
J. Fowler.

Smithport.

W. J. Colgrove.

Olean.

J. H. Brooks,
S. J. Noble.

West Carlton.

O. S. Waters.

Perry.

T. B. Catton,
J. Handley,
David Gates,
Clark Sandford.

Somerset.

G. G. Rice,
John Putnam,
Adam Miller,
J. Nelson,
Thomas Sherrif.

North Chili.

C. Brainard,
Wm. Porter,
T. Hannah,
A. Armin,
John Prue,
A. Patten,
Henry Smith.

Murray.

John M. Brace.

North Greece.

L. S. Bryan.

County Line.

John Haland.

Pavilion.

A. Pickard,
E. W. Hutchinson.

East Carlton.

Lewis Steadman.

Covington.

T. J. Jeffres,
M. W. Velzey,
James Velzey,
W. C. Bainbridge,
G. W. Pattridge,
A. H. Green,
L. B. Wolcott,
S. Heath.

Pekin.

Isaac M. Chesbrough,
R. Wilcox,
J. B. Pike,
S. K. J. Chesbrough,
Geo. P. Rose,
Jas. P. Raymond,
Judah S. Mitchell,
John Pletcher.

Caryville.

M. T. Dailey,
Richard Stevens,
William Manning,
Thomas Chappell,
Darius King.

Asbury.

M. Seekins,
C Sperry,
H. S. Husted,
S. Near.

West Carlton

Jesse Murdock;
Thomas Eckler,
Alanson Reddy,
O. L. Waters.

Barre.

J. G. Sanborn.

Spencerport.

A. Atchison,
A. Van Zile.

Royalton & Middleport.

David Welch,
Philo Ames,
F. M. Warner.

On motion of Bro. Estes, it was moved and carried that no member of this Convention shall speak more than once on any one question, until all others who wish to speak have spoken. And that no one be allowed to speak more than five minutes.

On motion of Bro. Estes, it was moved and carried that none be allowed to speak or vote in the Convention on any question, who is not in sympathy with this Convention, and approves of the objects set forth in the call.

The Committee on Resolutions came in and presented the following Report, which was read to the Convention:

As members of the Church of Jesus Christ, we have the deepest interest in the purity of her ministers. To them we look for instruction in those things that effect our everlasting welfare.

Their ministrations, and their example, influence us to a far greater extent than we are perhaps aware of. As Methodists, we have no voice in deciding who shall be our respective pastors. Any one of a hundred, whom those holding the reins of power may select, may be sent to us, and we are expected to receive and sustain him.—We may, then, properly feel and express a solicitude for the purity of the ministry at large, and especially for that portion of it comprising the Genesee Conference, within the bounds of which we reside.

In the New Testament, we learn that the Apostles—enjoying, as they did, the inspiration of the Holy Ghost—were accustomed, on important occasions, to consult the brethren at large, and to proceed according to their expressed decisions. We claim that reason and revelation both, give us the right to form and express our opinions of the public actions of the ministers who occupy our pulpits, and are sustained by our contributions. In theory, at least, we, as Protestants, deny the doctrine of infalli-

bility. It is possible for a majority of a Conference to be mistaken; it is also possible that they may take action which is unjust and wicked. We believe that Conferences, as well as other public bodies, may err, and that their acts are proper subjects of criticism, to approve or condemn, as the case may demand; and that individual members, for an honest expression of their convictions, ought not to be rewarded with proscription or excommunication: otherwise, concealment and corruption would be the order of the day.

We look upon the expulsion of Bros. Roberts and McCreery as an act of wicked persecution, calling for the strongest condemnation. It was also a palpable violation of that freedom of speech and of the press, which is guaranteed to all by our free institutions.

The facts, as we understand them, are these: For years past, among the preachers, there has prevailed a division, growing out of the connection of some with secret societies—a diversity of views upon the doctrine of holiness, and the holding of different views of the standard of justification.

Writers of the Regency party published, in the *Advocate* and other papers, articles doing great injustice to those who were trying to keep up the old land-marks of Methodism. Their partisan representations were producing their designed effects. Many felt that the time had come when a representation of the other side ought to be made.

Accordingly, Rev. B. T. Roberts wrote an article under the title of "New School Methodism," setting forth his views of the questions at issue. The candor and good spirit of his article is apparent. We have ourselves heard different preachers, in sympathy with the "Regency party," set forth views similar to those ascribed to them in "New School Methodism."

For writing this article, a charge of *immorality* was preferred against Rev. B. T. Roberts. He stated in open Conference, to the party who accused him, that if he had misrepresented them, he would correct and publish his mistake. No correction was made: no one claimed to have been misrepresented.

The charges were sustained by a majority vote, though in the specifications he was accused of having written what no honest construction of his words would bear. It was eagerly published, far and wide, that this useful preacher had been convicted of "immoral and unchristian conduct." To satisfy the general anxiety and desire to know in what the "immorality" consisted, one of our number published a second edition of "New School Methodism," the charges, specifications, and a short account of the trial. For circulating this document, these two brethren were tried at the last Conference, for "immoral and unchristian conduct," and expelled. One witness, and one only, Rev. J. Bowman, testified that Bro. R. handed him a package of these pamphlets for circulation, but which he never circulated.

Had the specifications been proved ever so clearly, they would not have constituted an offence *deserving of censure*. Upon such grounds were these men of God, Bros. Roberts and McCreery, expelled from the Conference and the Church. It would have been reasonable to have supposed, that common malignity would have been satisfied with deposing them from the ministry. But such was the malevolence of those controlling a majority of the votes of Conference, that they could not stop short of the utmost limit of their power. Had they not been restrained by the civil law, the fires of martyrdom might have been kindled in the nineteenth century, in Western New York.

So trifling was the accusation against these brethren, that in all the efforts that have been made to vindicate those voting for their condemnation, no one has attempted

to show that the testimony justified the decision. Their only defence is, "If these men did not deserve to be expelled for circulating the pamphlet, they did for promoting enthusiasm and fanaticism." If so, why were they not tried for it? Where is the justice of trying men for one thing, and condemning them for another?

In reference to this charge of "fanaticism and enthusiasm," we feel prepared to speak. Our means of information are far more reliable than that of those preachers who bring the accusation. We have attended the "Camp meetings and General Quarterly meetings," against which a special outcry has been made as the "hot-beds of enthusiasm." We have sat under the preaching of these brethren who are charged with promoting these disorders—have heard some of them by the year. *We know what Methodism is*; some of us were converted, and joined the Church, under the labors of her honored pioneers. We speak advisedly, then, when we say that the charge brought against Bros. Roberts and McCreery, and the class of preachers denominated "Nazaries," of promoting fanaticism, is *utterly false and groundless*. They are simply trying to have us in earnest to gain heaven. Instead of attacking the Church, they are its defenders. They preach the doctrines of the Methodist Church, as we used to hear them preached years ago; and through their instrumentality many have been made to rejoice in the enjoyment of a PRESENT AND FULL SALVATION. We cannot say this of their opposers. The Regency affirm that they preach the doctrines of holiness. We have yet to hear of the first person who has, of late years, experienced this blessing through their instrumentality. On the contrary, we believe some of them have put down the standard of justification, far below what Methodism and the Scriptures will warrant. Whether, therefore, we consider the ostensible, or the real cause of the expulsion of Bros. Roberts and

McCreery, the act calls for and receives our hearty and earnest condemnation.

Nor can we pass by, as undeserving of notice, the course pursued by the "Regency party," whenever complaints of a serious character have been brought against any of their number.

Reports that some of them have been guilty of "crimes expressly forbidden in the Word of God," and involving a high degree of moral turpitude, have been current. Complaints have been made, and though the proof of their guilt was deemed ample, yet they have been summarily dismissed, and in such a way as to discourage all efforts to bring to justice, before the Conference, any of the Regency preachers, no matter how wicked and immoral he may be.

Whether in their secret meetings, (the existence of which they at first so stoutly denied, but afterwards attempted to defend, when they were fully exposed,) any combination, expressed or implied, was entered into to screen their guilty partisans, and persecute their innocent opposers, we have no means of knowing; but it appears to us such has been the result. That we can have confidence in the Christian character of those whose votes are given to condemn the innocent, and to screen the guilty, is impossible. We also strongly disapprove and condemn the course taken by the dominant party in keeping out of Conference young men of approved piety, talent, and promise simply because they have too much Christian manliness, and conscience to become the tools of designing and ambitious men. We are true, loyal, God-fearing Methodists. We have not the slightest intention of leaving the church of our choice. We believe the evils complained of may be cured, and, for this purpose, we will leave no proper means untried.

One patent remedy is within our reach—the power to

withhold our supplies. We are satisfied that no matter how strongly we may condemn the course of the Regency faction, they will not amend, so long as they are sustained. Besides, we cannot in conscience give our money to put down the work of the Lord. Therefore, we wish it distinctly understood, that we cannot pay one farthing to preacher or presiding elder, who voted for the expulsion of Bros. Roberts and McCreery; only upon "contrition, confession, and satisfactory reformation."

It may be thought, by some, that such action on our part is revolutionary. But from the following extracts, it will appear that we are only exercising our undisputed rights in a constitutional way.

We are giving unquestionable proofs of our loyalty to the Church, by thus endeavoring to correct one of the most oppressive and tyrannical abuses of power that was ever heard of.

We trust that none will think of leaving the Church; but let us all stand by and apply the proper legitimate remedy for the shameless outrages that have been perpetrated under the forms of justice.

We quote from an Essay on Church Polity, by Rev. Abel Stevens, LL.D. This book has been adopted by the General Conference as a text-book in the course of study for young preachers. Hence it is of the highest authority.

Dr. Stevens says, "Church Polity," page 162: "What check have the *people* on this machinery? It is clear that as the preachers appoint the bishops, and the bishops distribute the preachers, the people should check the whole plan by a counterbalance upon the whole ministerial body. This is provided in the most decisive form that it could possibly assume, namely, the power of pecuniary supplies. No *stipulated contract* for support exists in the Methodist economy. The Discipline *allows* a certain support, but does not enforce it; and no Methodist preacher *can* pros-

ecute a civil suit for his salary. The General Conference disclaims all right to tax the property of our members.

“A Methodist Church has no necessity, in order to control or remove the preacher, to prosecute him by a tedious and expensive process at law, but simply to signify that after a given date HIS SUPPLIES CEASE. He cannot live on air; he must submit or depart.

“This would be a sufficient guarantee, certainly; and this check applies not merely to a specific prerogative of the ministry, but to the *whole* ministerial system. The lamented Dr. Emory thus states it:

“‘We have said that the Methodist Episcopal Church possesses effective and substantial security against any encroachments of tyranny on the part of her pastors.—For the sober truth is, that there is not a body of ministers in the whole world more perfectly dependent on those whom they serve than the Methodist itinerant ministry.—Our system places us, in fact, not only from year to year, or from quarter to quarter, but from week to week, within the reach of such a controlling check, on the part of the people, as is possessed, we verily believe, by no other denomination whatever.’”

Dr. Bond, in his “Economy of Methodism,” page 35, says: “The General Conference have never considered themselves authorized to levy taxes upon the laity, or to make any pecuniary contribution a condition of membership in the Church. Our preachers are totally dependent upon the voluntary contributions of the laity; and we thereby have over them a positive and absolute control; for whenever their flocks shall withdraw their support, the preachers will be under the necessity of abandoning their present pastoral relations, and of betaking themselves to some secular occupation. The traveling preacher who depends for bread, both for himself and family, upon the good will of the lay brethren, can have no temptation to

any unwarrantable or odious exercise of authority over them."

In "Ecclesiastical Polity, by Rev. A. N. Fillmore," page 166, we have the following: "Methodist preachers have no means of enforcing the payment of a cent for their support, for although the Discipline provides for a certain allowance, it furnishes no means to obtain it; and there is no article even to *expose a member to censure* for neglecting or refusing to contribute for the support of the Gospel."

Thus the right to withhold supplies, upon good and sufficient reasons, is conceded and urged by standard authors of our Church. That such a reason now exists, must be apparent to every one that is not entirely blinded to the claims of justice and humanity.

Nor can we approve of the action of the Bishop, in appointing to the office of Presiding Elders, men who participated in the proscriptive measures of the Regency party. We think that station ought to be filled with men who are in sympathy with the life and power of godliness, and who are laboring to promote it. We look upon the Church as an organization established to aid in securing the salvation of souls, and not mainly to raise money.

This Convention originated among ourselves. The first suggestion was made by one of our number. Neither the brethren expelled, nor any of the members of the Conference, had anything to do whatever with calling this Convention. We mention this fact, because the insinuation is frequently made, that the people can do nothing except at the instigation of the preachers. We are not papists—requiring to be instructed by the priesthood at every turn, what action we shall take, or what papers and books we shall read.

We assure our ministerial brethren—both those who have been thrust out of the Conference, and those who

remain, who are devoted to the work of spreading Scriptural holiness—that they have our ardent sympathy; and as long as they employ their time and talents in endeavoring to promote the life and power of godliness, we pledge ourselves to cordially sustain them, by our influence and our means, whether they are in the Conference or not.—Therefore,—

Resolved, That we have the utmost confidence in Bros. B. T. Roberts and Joseph McCreery, notwithstanding their expulsion from the Conference—ranking them as we do among the most pure and able ministers of the New Testament.

Resolved, That we adhere to the doctrines and usages of the fathers of Methodism. Our attachment to the M. E. Church is earnest and hearty; but we do not acknowledge the oppressive policy of the secret fraternity in the Conference, known as the Buffalo Regency, as the action of the Church, and we cannot and will not submit to the same. We hold it as a gross mal-administration under the assumed sanction of judicial forms.

Resolved, That the laity are of some use to the Church, and that their views and opinions ought to command some little respect, rather than that cool contempt with which their wishes have been treated by some of the officials of the Conference, for several years past.

Resolved, That the farcical cry of disunion and secession is the artful production of designing men, to frighten the feeble and timid into their plans of operation and proscription. We wish to have it distinctly understood that we have not, and never had, the slightest intention of leaving the Church of our choice, and that we heartily approve of the course of Bros. Roberts and McCreery in re-joining the Church at their first opportunity; and we hope that the oppressive and un-methodistic administration indicated in the pastoral address as the current policy of the majority

of the Conference, will not drive any of our brethren from the Church. Methodists have a better right in the Methodist Episcopal Church than anybody else, and by *God's* grace, in it we intend to remain.

Resolved, That it is a matter of no small grievance and of detriment to the Church of *God*, that these preachers, in their local, pastoral administration, have deliberately set themselves to exclude from official position in the Church, leaders, stewards, and trustees, members of deep and undoubted Christian experience, because of their adhesion to spiritual religious Methodism, and to supply their places with persons of slight and superficial religious experience, because of their adhesion to a worldly-policy Methodism.

Resolved, That we will not aid in the support of any member of the Genesee Conference who assisted, either by his vote or his influence, in the expulsion of Bros. Roberts and McCreery from the Conference and the Church, until they are fully reinstated to their former position; and that we do recommend all those who believe that these brethren have been *unjustly* expelled from the Conference and the Church, to take the same course.

Resolved, That we recommend Rev. B. T. Roberts and Rev. J. McCreery to travel at large, and labor, as opportunity presents, for the promoting of the work of God and the salvation of souls.

Resolved, That we recommend Bro. Roberts to locate his family in the city of Buffalo.

Resolved, That in our opinion, Bro. Roberts should receive \$1,000 for his support during the ensuing year, and Bro. McCreery should receive \$600.

Resolved, That we recommend the appointment of a committee of fifteen to carry out the above resolutions, each of whom shall be authorized to appoint collectors as they may deem necessary; and we also recommend the

appointment of a treasurer, to whom all moneys received for the purpose shall be paid, and who shall pay out the same, pro rata, to Bros. Roberts and McCreery, and receive their receipts for the same.

Resolved, That a copy of the foregoing preamble and resolutions be forwarded to the *Northern Independent*, with a request that the same be published.

S, K. J. CHESBROUGH, Pekin,
 WILLIAM DOYLE, Youngstown,
 GEORGE W. ESTES, Brockport,
 S. S. RICE, Clarkson,
 JOHN BILLINGS, Wilson,
 JONATHAN HANDLEY, Perry,
 ANTHONY AMES, Ridgeville,
Committee on Resolutions.

The first Resolution was read the second time, and passed by a unanimous vote.

The second Resolution was read, and passed by a unanimous vote.

The third Resolution was read, and passed by a unanimous vote.

The fourth Resolution was read.

Bro. Jeffers, of Covington, was not willing that the Committee on Resolutions should do all the thinking and speaking for us. I came here for light; I came here to be instructed.

After several brethren had spoken upon the propriety of using the words "designing men," the resolution was passed by a unanimous vote.

The fifth Resolution was then read, and called forth a spirited discussion, in which several of the brethren engaged.

Bro. T. H. Jeffers, of Covington, said: Mr. President, the Committee state certain things in respect to appointments, removals, and nominations to Church offices, which

I, for one, do not, from personal knowledge, know to be true ; I may believe them, but I wish to know. I am down here from old Covington circuit, in charge of which the Conference has not yet ventured to put one of the preachers of that faction whose policy is censured in this resolution. The expense of enslaving us to this policy will cost more than the experiment is worth, I mistrust, when it shall be tried. But I do not wish to vote what I do not know personally. When called in question for my vote, I want an answer ready. I call for the testimony under this specification.

Bro. Dunham, of Knowlesville, though usually in favor of expedition in public meetings, was nevertheless glad to see a debate opened on this resolution. Does this resolution call in question the right of the preacher to remove and appoint leaders, and to nominate and thereby virtually appoint stewards and trustees, as prescribed in the Discipline ? He hoped we should be guarded, and give no just occasion to be charged with disloyalty and revolutionary insubordination. He wanted all grievances redressed in an orderly and constitutional way, if possible.

Bro. G. W. Estes, of Clarkson, said : Not at all. It is everywhere conceded that the preacher has a perfect disciplinary right to appoint whomsoever he pleases to the leadership, and to nominate whom he pleases for stewards and trustees. Would to God they would observe the Discipline as closely in some other matters also ! We have no controversy with the law, or its legitimate administration. The law is good, when methodistically administered ; but when a foreign, unmethodistic power steps in to administer it, contrary to its obvious import and spirit, such administration becomes a grievance, and a detriment to the Church. It is virtually, if not literally, a mal-administration, and should be corrected. If the preacher wishes to appoint an idiot or a blackleg leader, or nominate him

steward or trustee, no one will question his prerogative to do so : it is his right under the law. But we have a right to feel aggrieved at it, and to say so. And this is all that this resolution does. What is complained of in this resolution has been done all through the land. The "orders in council" to this effect were published in the Buffalo organ of the faction more than three years ago, and have been faithfully executed, whenever practicable to do so. At Brockport, a man (here present,) was trustee year after year, while a backslider, and out of the Church. But as soon as he got religion, and began to pray in his family, and joined the Church, and attended class and prayer meetings, he was turned out of the trusteeship at the very next election, through the intrigues of the preacher. His religion was such as spoilt him for the office. It was of the sort to make a difference in him from what he was before, and thus disqualified him for official position in the Church. Salvation is at a heavy discount in Brockport. But there is a little in bank there yet—glory to God!

Bro. J. Smith, of Brockport: Yes, that is so—bless the Lord! After all our persecutions, there are some left in Brockport who have survived the removal of leaders; and what is more, the appointment of leaders. Bro. Estes has spoken somewhat of our affairs, and in so doing, has called me out. But the half has not been told. Bro. Estes was once leader there; I was also. His class and mine were well filled always—his to overflowing. Everybody, as fast as they got religion, wanted to join one or the other of these classes. The "fanaticism," as it was called, predominated in them, and drew a room full every time. If the preacher came in to try and stem the tide, it was no use; it swept over him like a rush. Soon the classes were divided, and cut up, in a way to stop the "fanaticism," as God's work was called. Some of the live ones were put into another class, under a secret-society

leader, to cool them down. But when he came to meet his class, there were present, all told, one traveling preacher, one local preacher, one leader, and one poor, pious colored girl, who thought she must meet class where she was set to. She protested against being thought of so much consequence as to require two preachers and one leader to lead her; so she fled back to the fold again. Soon our class-books were called for to be looked over, and were kept for nine weeks, during which time nobody knew who was leader. After a while, Bro. Estes was removed, and at length, I also. There seemed to be a harder effort to kill out the life and power of religion, than to get souls saved; and all the appointments by the preacher seemed to look in that direction. The resolution is emphatically appropriate, as far as the administration in Brockport is concerned.

Bro. T. B. Catton said: I hail from Perry. We had a session of the Genesee Conference there lately: therefore, we are here. We had a leader of twenty years' standing; he had stood through thick and thin; he was not a man to be spoken against. Like leader, like class. There was life and power in our class and prayer-meetings—just as there had been from the beginning. We were chiefly English, and knew what Methodism was. Two years ago, (I call no names—the Minutes will show who was our preacher,) the preacher took a fancy that the sort of religion we had was a little too antiquated, or vociferous, or something of that sort; and so our class was disbanded, leader and all, and set off to other classes. This was considered an underhanded way of doing what the preacher did not dare to do directly. This is not the only instance in which the heritage of the Lord has been wasted there. Perry was once a strong society—eminently Methodistie. We have slept while the enemy has been sowing tares.—We have had too much confidence in our ministers. We

took it for granted they were servants of God and of the Church, while in fact they were the servants of a secret inquisition in our midst. The Conference session at Perry has opened the eyes of our people there. We presume no member of the majority will care to be stationed at Perry another year. We were chiefly English, and they counted on our Methodistic loyalty to sustain the preacher they have sent us. Some will do it—if they choose.

Bro. W. Parsons, of Yates, said: I hail from a quarter of the Lord's plantation, where the policy complained of has been pursued as far as circumstances would admit, without provoking open insurrection. Indeed, we are very little short of that condition now. At our last election for trustees, two old and substantial members were left out of the board, and their places filled by younger men, notorious for adhering to worldly-policy Methodism. Three old trustees were called upon privately, and inquired of if they would use their official influence against the Nazarites, as the religious part of the society was called. They answered that they should go in for the life and power of religion, as they always had done. They were then told that they could not be elected; and all the outsiders who had ever attended meeting, or who had paid a quarter at a donation, were rallied out to vote against them. The influence and management of the preacher controlled the election, as is generally the case. Since then, and no longer ago than last week, the church was locked against the funeral of one of the most aged and wealthy members, because he had selected Bro. Roberts to officiate on the occasion; and this act received the public commendation of the venerable author of the Pastoral Address. There is no time to mention all the cases sustaining the grievances set forth in this resolution. But in the midst of all, they cannot hinder us from enjoying salvation in our souls; the consolations of God abound to us in the midst of all

our persecutions. Glory to Jesus! A goodly number in Yates remain, who mean to be free and enjoy religion at all hazards. What the Pastoral Address means by our "exciting insubordination and enjoying religion," is this: Most of those who profess to enjoy religion in Yates, refuse to pay our money for doing the work that was done at the last two Conferences; but apply it to help those brethren who are persecuted by this secret-society faction in the Conference. This insubordinate conduct we propose to continue, as necessarily antecedent to enjoying religion.

Bro. Jones, of Batavia, said: This resolution will be perfectly intelligible in Batavia; it will not need any comment. We have a preacher who goes the whole Regency figure with a strong hand. We had a leader there, who had filled the office for many years; he was an old-line Methodist. It would not sound well to remove him outright; besides this, he had a *pocket* which might have been affected adversely by open proscription. So an assistant leader, a tool of the preacher, was appointed; and being sustained by the preacher and governed by his instructions, he acted in such an outrageous manner, that our old leader, (who was a peaceful man,) gave up his class-book to avoid controversy and collision in the classroom. By this crafty means, the preacher got rid of him without directly turning him out. He was a man of deep piety, and of substantial social position in the community. Also, a brother was turned out for saying "amen" in meeting. The charge against him, in imitation of Conference prosecutions, was for "unchristian and immoral conduct;" but everybody in our vicinity knew this to be only a judicial sham. About the time of the Caryville General Quarterly Meeting, he had committed the crime of getting unreasonably blessed in meeting, even beyond an "innate sense of propriety," and was turned out of the synagogue for that "unchristian and immoral conduct." About the

same time, our preacher prepared a document forbidding the saying "amen" in meeting, or anything of that sort, and wanted the official board to sign it. Our leader, and some others, would not do it, which made him more furious than ever. We have had great times in Batavia; but the work of God grows more and more in the midst of all these persecutions. The devil is evidently alarmed for his kingdom there, and the preacher manifests a similar concern. All these removals and appointments are only the necessary evolutions to embody his forces into a more effective array against living, spiritual Methodism. But,

" We'll drive the battle on,
We'll drive the battle on;
In Jesus' might we'll stand the fight,
And drive the battle on."

Bro. Jeffers, of Covington, said: Now we have got the testimony in this case, I think we may as well pass the resolution. All I wanted was to get the facts before this body. Our living membership ought not to be imposed upon by having such officials set over them. Methodism was designed to be *officiated* by religious men; not by the menials of an inquisition, nor the ungodly devotees of worldly policy. The people ought not only to speak out, but to act out—strike this Upas at the root.

On motion, the Convention adjourned, to meet again at half-past one o'clock.

Afternoon Session.

Convention met. A. I. Wood in the chair. Prayer by Bro. —.

The Committee on Finance reported that we should need about twenty-five dollars to defray expenses. On motion, a collection was then taken up; amounting to twenty-four dollars, which was decided sufficient, and the Committee was discharged.

The sixth Resolution was then read.

Bro. Jeffers arose and said: Mr. Chairman, we have a right, under proper circumstances, to use Scripture phrases. "By the life of Pharoah," I perceive that ye are designing men! I perceive that ye are come here to act with decision. I have always been a Methodist. My mother and father were converted under the labors of John Wesley. No wonder, then, that I am so fully attached to the Church of my choice. My father died before my remembrance. My mother was poor. She had to use the most rigid economy, in order to support the family. Yet, amid all our penury, my mother always paid her quarterage; and I well remember how she used to say to us, "Children, quarterly meeting is coming around; we must pay our preacher; we have no money. What is to be done? You must go without butter." Yes, sir; we used to eat our bread dry, for two or three weeks; and my mother would take the butter so saved to the store, and get money to pay our preacher. This is the way my mother taught me. I may well say that I drew from my mother's breast the practice of paying the Methodist preacher. I have always done so. But, sir, in this resolution we say, that we will withhold our money from certain preachers. Sir, is there no other way to meet this difficulty? Can there be no other means used? I would to God that there could; but, sir, I can not see how we are to meet the case in any other way. It is a very strong measure; but, sir, upon mature reflection, I must vote for the resolution.

Cries from all over the Convention—"Question, question."

The resolution was then passed, by a unanimous vote.

The seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth Resolutions, were then unanimously passed.

The following committee were then appointed, as called for in the tenth resolution:

ISAAC M. CHESBROUGH, *Treasurer*, Post Office address, South Pekin, Niagara Co.

BUFFALO DISTRICT.—A. W. Perry, Ira P. Wheeler, M. Osborn.

NIAGARA DISTRICT.—W. H. Doyle, Isaac C. Parsons, S. K. J. Chesbrough.

GENESEE DISTRICT.—A. Van Zile, S. S. Rice, John Dorman.

WYOMING DISTRICT.—J. Grisewood, C. Reynolds, E. J. Jeffers.

OLEAN DISTRICT.—S. J. Noble, G. C. Sheldon, George Bascom.

The eleventh Resolution was then read. A motion was made to amend by adding the *Northern Christian Advocate*.

Bro. S. K. J. Chesbrough said: Mr. Chairman, I shall oppose the amendment from personal feelings. I prepared a copy of the call for the *Northern*, and mailed it myself, at the same time that I mailed the one to the *Independent*, but it was not published. We have every evidence, sir, that that paper is not in sympathy with us or our Convention. I am willing to write as many copies as you may order; but I think the time had better be spent in prayer, than writing for the *Northern* what we know will not be published in that paper. I thank God we have a paper through whose columns we may speak. I hope we will, to a man, sustain the *Independent*.

Bro. Jeffers said: Mr. Chairman, I know what the brother has said is true; but, sir, we read of the widow and unjust judge, and though he feared neither God or man, yet, lest she should weary him with her continual coming, he granted her her desire. I hope we will try again. I hope the amendment will pass.

Motion to amend lost. The resolution as read was then passed, and the preamble and resolutions, as a whole, were adopted.

Rev. B. I. Ives, of Auburn, was called for, and came forward and addressed the Convention. His speech was such as Bro. Ives, and he only, could make. The history of the "rise and progress" of the *Independent*, was given

in such a manner as to open the eyes of many of the Convention to the importance of more fully sustaining the paper. After the conclusion of his address, the following resolution was passed :

Resolved, That the thanks of this Convention are due, and are hereby tendered to Bro. Ives, for the remarks which we have had the pleasure of listening to.

It was then

Resolved, That the thanks of this Convention are hereby tendered to the inhabitants of Albion, for their kindness in entertaining the members of this Convention during their stay in the village.

Resolved, That when we adjourn, we adjourn to meet at North Bergen, June 25th, 1859,—appropriate notice to be given by the President and Secretary.

The following resolutions were then passed :

Resolved, That a committee be appointed to correspond with brethren in different parts of the work, upon the propriety of establishing, in the city of Buffalo, a periodical devoted to the advocacy of "Earnest Christianity."

The Chair appointed the following committee: Rev. B. T. Roberts, Rev. Lorin Stiles, Rev. C. D. Burlingham, Leonard Halstead, S. C. Springer, G. C. Sheldon.

Resolved, That we tender to the Publishing Association of the *Northern Independent* our hearty thanks for their liberality in opening their columns for the publication of our notices, and for its fearless defense of truths pertaining to our interests.

On motion, it was

Resolved, That we now commence a subscription for the support of Bros. Roberts and McCreery, as provided in the ninth resolution.

Subscriptions to the amount of \$425 were made, of which \$97.50 was paid in.

Convention then adjourned.

From the Olean Advertiser.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE LAYMEN'S CONVENTION,

Of the M. E. Church, Genesee Conference, held in the Presbyterian Church, Olean, Wednesday and Thursday, Feb. 1st and 2nd, 1860.

A Convention of the Laymen of the Methodist Episcopal Church, of the Genesee Conference, assembled, pursuant to a call, which we published, at the Presbyterian Church, in this village. The Convention was large, every charge or congregation in the Conference being represented. It was at first intended to hold the Convention in the Methodist Church in this village; but Judge Green, upon the application of a member of the Church, granted an injunction restraining and forbidding the trustees to open their edifice for this purpose. With a commendable liberality, the trustees of the Presbyterian Church tendered the use of their house for the holding of the Convention.

At 10 o'clock, on Wednesday morning, Abner I. Wood, President of the Laymen's Convention, called the delegates to order, and S. K. J. Chesbrough, Secretary, assumed the duties of his office. Our reporter, George W. Norton, Esq., gives us the following elaborate report of the proceedings:

The Convention opened with prayer by Mr. S. C. Springer, of Gowanda; after which the Secretary, Mr. Chesbrough, read the call of the Convention. He also read a letter from D. W. Tinkham, expressing his strong sympathy with the object of the Convention.

A resolution was offered and adopted, requesting Bro. L. Stiles, Jr., to preach, and administer the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, this evening.

Mr. Chesbrough presented a lengthy memorial to the General Conference, upon the subject of the expelled ministers, which was read, and laid upon the table for the present.

A motion was made and adopted, that the delegates of

the different charges in the Conference, hand in their names to the Secretary. Every charge was found to be fully represented. The delegate from the "Free Methodist Church," in Albion, was invited to a seat in the Convention.

The memorial which was read by Mr. Chesbrough at the opening of the Convention was discussed, and the following finally substituted:

" PETITION.

"To the Bishops and Members of the General Conference of the M. E. Church, to be held in Buffalo, N. Y., May 1, 1860.

" REVEREND FATHERS AND BRETHREN:

" We, the undersigned, members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in the bounds of the Genesee Conference, respectfully represent to your Reverend body, that a very unpleasant state of things prevails in the Church throughout this Conference. This difficulty has grown out of the judicial action of the Conference. Many honestly believe this action to have been wrong and oppressive. We therefore, ask your Reverend body, to give to the judicial action of the Genesee Conference, by which six of the ministers, to wit: B. T. Roberts, J. McCreery, Jr., J. A. Wells, Wm. Cooley, L. Stiles, Jr., and C. D. Burlingham, have been expelled from the Conference and the Church, a full and careful investigation, trusting you will come to such decision as righteousness demands. We also ask your Reverend body so to amend the judicial law of the Church, as to secure to the ministers and members the right of trial by an impartial committee."

A motion was adopted, authorizing the chair to appoint a committee of five, to procure a sufficient number of copies of the memorial to be printed for circulation in the Conference. W. J. Colgrove, S. K. J. Chesbrough, S. C. Springer, Rev. J. A. Wells, and Rev. B. T. Roberts, were appointed such committee.

The following petition to the General Conference was read and adopted :

“ PETITION.

“ To the Bishops and Members of the General Conference of the M. E. Church, to be held in Buffalo, N. Y., May 1st, 1860.

“ REVEREND FATHERS AND BRETHREN :

“ Inasmuch as there are now known to be, in the Slave States, many members of the Methodist Episcopal Church who hold their fellow-beings, and even their brethren in Christ, as slaves, contrary to natural justice and the Gospel of Christ ; and whereas, we believe the buying, selling, or holding of a human being as property, is a sin against God, and should in no wise be tolerated in the Church of Christ : therefore,

“ We, the undersigned, members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the ——— charge, Genesee Conference, would earnestly petition your Reverend body to place a chapter in the Discipline of the M. E. Church, that will exclude all persons from the M. E. Church or her communion, who shall be guilty of holding, buying or selling, or in any way using a human being as a slave.”

A motion was made and adopted, that a committee of five be appointed on finance. The following gentlemen were appointed : T. B. Catton, S. K. J. Chesbrough, S. C. Springer, C. H. Knox, and Wilson Gordon.

Moved, that two hundred and fifty copies each, of the memorial and petition, be published and placed in the hands of the committee for distribution.

Rev. B. T. Roberts said that his opinions on slavery were not changed. He had always been an anti-slavery man ; and the first speech he had ever made, was an anti-slavery speech. He was opposed to its being in the Church ; it had no more right there than the devil had. The reverend gentleman said it had been reported that he had reported that he had received a letter from a presiding elder,

stating that he had better drop the hobby of Holiness, and take up the Slavery Issue. He had never received any such letter.

The Genesee Conference, in former days, was thoroughly anti-slavery. It seems, by the returns of the last Conference, that there is a change somewhere. The report on slavery was permitted to get into the hands of the committee; and it seems they were either afraid or ashamed to publish it in their minutes.

The reverend gentleman proceeded at some length, and declared that if the Church would only take hold of the matter in the right way, and in the right spirit, slavery would soon be extirpated from the land. He declared his determination to labor for such a result as long as he should live.

Rev. J. McCreery, and others, followed in a similar strain, and hoped that the Church would do her duty.

The following resolution was then adopted:

“*Resolved*, That we are highly pleased with the appearance of the *Earnest Christian*. The articles, thus far, prove it to be just what is needed at this time, when a conforming and superficial Christianity is prevailing everywhere. We hail it with delight among us; and we pledge ourselves to use our exertions to extend its circulation.”

The Convention then adjourned until two o'clock P. M.

Afternoon Session.

The Convention re-assembled—Rev. J. W. Reddy conducting the religious exercises, which consisted of reading the Scriptures, singing and praying.

Rev. J. A. Wells thought, after the last Conference, his labor in the ministry was about used up. But, after the Albion Convention, he resolved to go at it. He had met with good success, and had larger congregations than ever

before. He had no idea how he was going to get a support; but he had received a better support than ever. He thought he had done more work for good, than in a year previous. This movement had been sneered at by some, who said it would soon die down; but he apprehended different. The prospect is bright, and there is every evidence that the Lord is with us.

The following resolution was here offered:

“Resolved, That we reiterate our unfaltering attachment to the M. E. Church; while we protest against, and repudiate its abuses and iniquitous administration, by which we have been aggrieved, and the Church scandalized.—Our controversy is in favor of the doctrines and discipline of the Church, and against temporary mal-administration. And we exhort our brethren everywhere not to secede, or withdraw from the Church, or be persuaded into any other ecclesiastical organization; but to form themselves into bands, after the example of early Methodism, and remain in the Church until expelled.”

Rev. J. McCreery said: Four years ago, when we commenced this war, we sought to bring back Methodism to its pristine purity, and throw out these innovations which had crept in. We can spare all the preachers, if the Lord, and the people, will be with us. We intend to stick to the Church. We are where we stood years ago, and intend to stay there. We must stand on the Discipline, which is the Constitution of the Church. We are not secessionists, and they cannot drive us out, unless they expel us. We propose to stay in the Church. I am in favor of that resolution.

The further consideration of the resolutions was postponed until to-morrow. The Committee on Resolutions reported as follows:

“PREAMBLE.—God deals with us as individuals. No man or body of men can take the responsibility of our

actions. It is a Bible doctrine, very clearly taught, that 'every one must give account of himself to God.'

"Ministers cannot take into their hands the keeping of our consciences. The right of private judgment lies at the foundation of the great Protestant Reformation. It forms the basis of all true religion. No person who does not act and think for himself, can enjoy either the sanctifying or justifying grace of God. When John Wesley was told that he could not continue in the Church of England, because he could 'not in principle *submit to her determinations*,' he replied, 'If that were necessary, I could not be a member of any Church under Heaven; for I must still insist upon the right of private judgment. *I cannot yield either implicit faith or obedience to any man or number of men under Heaven.*'

"This is equally true of every honest man. In our Church, the government is vested exclusively in the ministry; the bishops appointing the preachers to whatever charge they please, and thus having the power to influence them to a great extent, if not to absolutely control them, by the hope of obtaining preferment, if they are submissive, and the fear of being placed in an obscure position, if they do not carry out the will of their superiors. They are elected by the ministers, and are responsible alone to the men who are thus completely dependent upon them for their position in the Church. The General Conference, possessing all the power to make laws for the Churches, is composed exclusively of ministers, elected by ministers.—The Annual Conference, which says who shall preach and who shall not, is made up of ministers. The book agents, wielding a mighty pecuniary influence, are ministers. The official editors, controlling the public sentiment of the Church, are ministers. The same principle is carried out in the administration upon our circuits and stations. The preacher sent on—it may be, in opposition to the wishes of

a large majority of the members—appoints all the leaders, nominates the stewards, and licenses the exhorters. If he wishes to expel a member, he selects the committee, and presides over the trial as judge. He goes out with them, and sees that they make up their verdict as he desires.

“The only check to this immense clerical power—without a parallel, unless it is in the Church of Rome—consists in the right of the laity to refuse to support those ministers who abuse their trust, and show themselves unworthy of confidence. This only remedy in our power against clerical oppression, we have felt bound to apply.

“The course of those members of the Genesee Conference, known as the ‘Regency party,’ in screening one another when lying under the imputation of gross and flagrant immoralities; and in expelling from the Conference and the Church devoted ministers of the Gospel, whose only crime consisted in the ability and success with which they taught and enforced the doctrine of holiness, and the fidelity with which they labored to secure the exclusion of slaveholders from the Church,—this course so contrary to the spirit of the Gospel, as honest men going to judgment, we felt called upon to discountenance. We dare not give these ministers God-speed in their bloody work, lest we be partakers in their evil deeds. We accordingly voted, in our conventions, that we could not sustain these preachers who were putting down the work of God.

“These efforts of ours to correct great evils have been met by persecutions worthy of the priests of Rome in her darkest days. Men of approved piety of long standing, whose prayers and efforts and money have been freely given to promote the interests of the Church, have been expelled from the communion of their choice for having dared to act according to their convictions. Therefore,

“*Resolved*, That we heartily endorse the sentiments contained in the Preambles and Resolutions passed at the

Albion Conventions, (December, 1858, and November, 1859.) The position then taken, we this day unhesitatingly affirm, in our estimation, to be right. Convinced more than ever, that we need to act as one body in this matter, we hereby pledge ourselves unflinchingly and uncompromisingly to stand by the principles then laid down; and to sustain, by our sympathy and our aid, our brethren in the ministry who have been the subjects of a heartless and wicked proscription.

Resolved, That we heartily condemn the practice pursued by many of the Regency preachers, in reading out members as withdrawn from the Church, without even the form of a trial, or without even laboring with them. We deem it an act of outrage upon our rights as members of the Church, contrary to the discipline, and in direct opposition to the spirit of Christ. We truly extend to our brethren and sisters who have thus been illegally read out from our beloved Zion, the right hand of fellowship. We rejoice that the 'Lamb's Book of Life' is beyond the reach of human hands. And while they continue faithful followers of Jesus, whether in or out of the Church, we hail them as members of the body of Christ."

The preamble was unanimously adopted.

Rev. J. McCreery said he was in favor of the resolutions, as he wanted some one to stand by him in this warfare of the Lord.

Bro. S. K. J. Cheshbrough was in favor of the resolutions, as they were of the right stamp; he hoped they would be adopted, and all go home, and carry them into practice.—Let us go into the work, body and soul and all. I will lose the last drop of my blood, before I will lose my principles. We read of three Hebrew children who went into the fiery furnace; the only effect it had upon them was to burn off their bands. I am ready for the same trial, if necessary.

Bro. T. B. Catton said it was vastly different to come here and resolve, and then go home and act. We, in Perry, have organized a band, and intend to have our own preacher and preaching. I, for one, intend to carry this resolution into effect.

Bro. Wm. Hart said: I have always looked upon this movement, not altogether in sympathy with these men who have been expelled, but as a movement for vital godliness. We are coming to that time, when he who is not for us is against us. If I did not think God was with this movement, I would not be here. If God has called these men to preach, he has not revoked that call. These ministers in the Conference, who will not associate with these men, are creating a schism in the Church. Let our pockets and our sympathies be with these men. I am in favor of the resolutions.

Bro. Elmer followed in similar remarks, and declared his intention not to support a Regency preacher. He would stand by the resolutions to the last.

Rev. B. T. Roberts said: Is it a duty for us to support any minister, who is sent to us? The Bible settles that question, in the negative. The laity have no representation; and we, as ministers, to do good, must have the cooperation of the laity. The preachers control all affairs, from beginning to end.

The reverend gentleman here read from the "Church Polity," by the Rev. Abel Stevens, which defended his position that a Church were not obliged to support any minister whom they did not like. At the last Conference, ministers were retained in the Conference, when it was known that reports were in circulation very damaging to them; and those who were instrumental in promulgating those charges were expelled. Some of them had communed with Universalists, and then voted to expel Bro. Wells and Bro. Stiles, for allowing me to exhort in their pulpits.

The very best men, distinguished for godliness and piety, are expelled from the Church. The time has now come for us to act. It is enough to make an infant's sinews strong as steel. The very men they have expelled are always found by the side of the rugged cross of Christ.—The reverend gentleman here paid a high tribute to the piety and godliness of those who had been expelled—one of them a class-leader of thirty-five years' standing. He also read letters from individuals in the different States, urging on the movement. The reverend gentleman concluded his remarks by a stirring exhortation to the laymen to continue on in the work, and labor with increased zeal for the salvation of souls. His peroration was truly eloquent.

Rev. J. W. Reddy said: There was one point which we were apt to overlook; which is, that we do not fight men, but principles. If our brethren would get this sympathy for men out of their heads, we would be better off. Let them recollect, it is for God and salvation that we labor. If we know that God is on our side, let us go on, regardless of the consequences. The Spirit of God, and policy, are at antipodes with each other. We will never suffer for what God asks us to do. He believed that he was right, and that God was with him. The reverend gentleman concluded his remarks with an exhortation to the laymen to stand firm, and do their duty.

The resolutions were then adopted unanimously.

The Convention then adjourned until nine o'clock to-morrow morning.

Second Day's Proceedings.

Convention re-assembled—Bro. Wm. Hart conducting the religious exercises.

Moved and adopted, that the members be restricted, in their speeches, to five minutes.

Moved and adopted, that a committee of five be appointed—one from each district—to circulate petition and memorial. The following were appointed as such committee: Rev. J. W. Reddy, Olean; Bro. T. B. Catton, Wyoming; Bro. C. H. Knox, Genesee; Rev. B. T. Roberts, Buffalo; Bro. S. K. J. Chesbrough, Niagara.

Moved and adopted, that I. M. Chesbrough, of South Pekin, be a committee of one to present the petition and memorial to the General Conference.

The resolution yesterday offered by Bro. Wm. Hart, and laid upon the table, was called up.

Bro. T. B. Catton said, we could organize bands, and still be in the Church, as it was in the discipline. He was opposed to secession always. We have organized bands in Wyoming, and have met with good success, for the Lord has been with us.

Bro. Wm. Hart contended that the constitution of the Church discountenanced slavery. He argued that the discipline granted every member a fair trial. But all those who had been expelled, had been denied that privilege.—We have no need to secede, but keep right on for God, and not be persuaded into any other ecclesiastical organization. Four were read out in my district on mere suspicion. He was in favor of the resolution.

Bro. Rumble believed those who were called Nazarites, were holy men, and that God was with them; for his part, he was with them. He rather doubted the idea of organizing bands; but if it was considered the best course, let us do it.

Bro. Colgrove wanted a holy ministry, and none other; and declared his intention to stand by the Church; and spurned the idea of doing anything to militate against the Church. He was strongly in favor of bands. If mal-administration expels me from the Church, I will stand by Methodism.

Rev. B. T. Roberts contended that these bands were no new thing, but were being organized all over the country, and in Europe, for the salvation of souls; and said that Orville Gardner was the leader of one in New York. He hoped these bands would be organized everywhere. If the ministers would help you, all right; if not, go right on without them.

Bro. S. K. J. Chesbrough said, that their bands, in his place, had been very prosperous, and many had been converted. He gave a history of their organization, which started with only ten, and now has about thirty. He was strongly in favor of bands, and urged his brethren to do likewise.

Rev. J. McCreery did not want to follow the plan of bands like Orville Gardner, but such as were contained in the Methodist Discipline. The resolution defines itself. The members of his band in his district had not been turned out as yet, and they won't dare to do it.

Rev. J. W. Reddy said, that the Regency preachers held the opinion that these bands were unconstitutional; but he denied it, and urged that they had as good a right to do so, as they had to join the Odd Fellows or Masons. He believed in standing by the Church, but contended for the right of religious liberty. He hoped his brethren would go at it with energy, and organize these bands.

After some further remarks, the resolution was unanimously adopted.

The following resolution was offered by S. K. J. Chesbrough:

WHEREAS, The wants of the cause of God demand the holding of Camp-meetings, General Quarterly meetings, and other general gatherings of our people, in the several districts, demanding judicious and general counsel and co-operation, in appointing and conducting the same; therefore,

“Resolved, That the following laymen and local preachers, together with the traveling preachers appointed by this Convention, be an executive council in each district respectively, to appoint and superintend all Camp meetings, General Quarterly meetings, and such other general meetings as they may judge proper; and in the interim of the sessions of this Convention, to take the general oversight of the work within the bounds of their respective districts.”

Rev. J. McCreery, in a few remarks, strongly advocated the adoption of the resolution, which was done. The following are the appointments:

GENESEE DISTRICT.—*Preachers*: Alonzo Reddy, Claudius Brainard, A. B. Castle. *Laymen*: J. R. Annis, G. W. Estes, J. O. Prue.

NIAGARA DISTRICT.—*Preachers*: John Cannon, Russel Wilcox, John Fuller. *Laymen*: W. H. Doyle, A. Ames.

OLEAN DISTRICT.—*Preachers*: Titus Roberts, G. W. Fuller, Ichabod White. *Laymen*: S. C. Springer, G. C. Sheldon, John Huff.

WYOMING DISTRICT.—*Preachers*: Geo. W. Coleman, A. H. Green, E. W. Sears. *Laymen*: T. B. Catton, J. Chester, W. Holmes.

BUFFALO DISTRICT.—*Preachers*: A. W. Perry, Sidney Aldrich, Mitchell Osborn. *Laymen*: Thos. Sully, Henry Hartshorn, Clark Reynolds.

The following resolution, introduced by S. K. J. Cheshbrough, was unanimously adopted by a rising vote:

“Resolved, That we look with lively interest on the denominational position of the Free Methodist Church of Albion, under the pastoral care of Rev. L. Stiles, Jr.; that we rejoice in her prosperity; that we hail her as a welcome co-laborer in the vineyard of our common Master, and as a worthy member in the sisterhood of Evangelical Churches.”

Rev. Loren Stiles, Jr., as pastor of the Church, thanked the Convention for the compliment, and could assure them that it was duly appreciated. He said that the Free Methodist Church was in sympathy with them. He urged his

brethren to stay in the Church, and if they left, let it be by compulsion on the part of the opposite party. The work of God which you here represent is going on gloriously, all over.

He gave a short history of the formation of the Free Methodist Church in Albion, and told his hearers never to form one, unless they were compelled to do so. He contended it was not an issue between the Free Methodist Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, but an issue between God and the devil. His remarks were well received.

A resolution endorsing the course of the *Northern Independent*, was unanimously adopted by a rising vote.

The following resolution, offered by Bro. S. K. J. Cheshbrough, was adopted unanimously :

“ *Resolved*, That we tender to the trustees and members of this Church, our thanks for the use of their house for our meeting. The Christian courtesy manifested by them, contrasted with the proscriptive course pursued by the presiding elder, pastor, and some of the Church trustees of the Methodist Church, in closing, by legal process, their house against us, will always be appreciated by us.”

A motion was made that Rev. Loren Stiles, Jr., be requested to preach in the evening, which was adopted.

Moved that the proceedings of this Convention be published in the *Northern Independent*. Adopted.

After some remarks from Rev. B. T. Roberts, and others, the Convention, at twelve o'clock, M., adjourned *sine die*.

CHAPTER IX.

THE Free Methodist Church proper, down to this time, had existed in a state of embryo only ; the period having not yet arrived when it was to become developed into that outward, independent form which it afterwards assumed. Our history of the denomination thus far, therefore could only take on a preliminary character. But enough has been said to make us acquainted with their peculiar *animus*, and the one great object at which they aim. We have already seen that they are *Methodists*—that they are Methodists of the true, Wesleyan stamp ; “ following the Lord wholly ”—their only aim being to “ spread Scripture holiness over the land,” and “ work out their own salvation with fear and trembling.” These brethren had no preconcerted plan for the future, otherwise than to do the will of God, as far as made known to them, and go forward in the use of the appointed means of grace. As “ Abraham, being called to go out into a country which he should afterwards inherit, obeyed and went out, not knowing whither he went,” so they were ready to go out into any field of labor, or undertake any expedition or enterprise, to which they might be called in the Providence of God.

The thought of leaving the Church never entered their hearts. Much less, if possible, did they seek to divide it. They generally mourned over its departure from “ the old land-marks ” of pure, primitive Methodism ; and were anxious to bring it back to its own acknowledged standards of faith and practical godliness ; and it grieved them that

their efforts in this direction should be baffled by a determined, persecuting opposition; and yet they loved the Church.

But, trampled under foot and despised as these brethren were, they constituted an element of vital godliness—an element of strength and hope in the old Church; a conservative, reformatory element of great promise; and had she retained them within her pale, as the Church of England retained the Wesleyan societies, she might, in the same way, have been benefited by the connection. But, less tolerant, alas! of the life of religion than even that cold, formal, pleasure-taking, semi-papal hierarchy, she cast them out of her communion, and brought herself to the very brink of ruin as the consequence!

Never was there a class of individuals more attached to the M. E. Church than these so-called Nazarites. They clung to her institutions and altars with all that filial affection which a child feels for its mother, and nothing seemed capable of alienating them from the Old Church. Long as they had suffered, and much as they had been abused on account of their devotion to the Church's true interests, they were, nevertheless, intent upon remaining in her bosom, cold as it was, and doing her all the good in their power.

Those Lay Conventions, whose proceedings are narrated in the preceding chapter, were convened at no little expense of time and labor—not to create “a schism in the body,” nor yet to consult upon measures of secession; but solely to see what could be done, if anything, for the amelioration of the condition of a Church so dear to them; and to extend their sympathy to those brethren she had so barbarously cast off, in such practical form as might encourage them to “hold fast whereunto they had attained,” as the friends of Jesus, and to go forward in the work to which they had been called, of promoting the cause of

holiness, and the salvation of souls. These lay brethrer repeatedly declared, during their deliberations, that they had no intention or wish to leave the Old Church; and if ever their connection with her should become dissolved, she, and not they, must bear the responsibility. And even the Rev. Mr. Stiles, though he had been expelled from the M. E. Church, and was actually settled over an independent congregation at the time, "advised them not to secede."

Long did these proscribed brethren cherish the hope that the Church which had so wickedly expelled them would come to see the error of her persecuting career, at least in the light of *consequences*, and change her course. This was evidently the ground of the advice of Mr. Stiles. And it was this hope, so fondly entertained down to the sitting of the General Conference of 1860, which led to the sending up a petition to that body, very numerously signed by the people, asking for an investigation of the Genesee Conference difficulties; and a memorial, signed by several of the preachers, containing specific complaints against a majority of the Genesee Conference for their action as a body, and "asking the restoration of Bro. Roberts and others who had been unjustly expelled, to their former standing in the ministry; and the providing of requisite safe-guards against any and all such abuses in the future." The memorial here referred to, though of considerable length, and somewhat minute in detail, yet, from its intrinsic merits, and great relative importance in this connection, will now be introduced.

To the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in session at Buffalo, May, 1860.

REVEREND FATHERS AND BRETHREN:

Your memorialists beg leave to call your attention to the difficulties that distract our Zion within the bounds of

the Genesee Conference. These difficulties are of long standing, and of such importance as to demand your serious attention, and the application of such remedies as you, in your wisdom, may devise. They do not primarily grow out of the slavery question, or the old and new paper issue—though these have come to be somewhat involved in the controversy. They have their origin, as we believe, in a difference of views among us about experimental religion. It is a revival of the old controversy between the life and power of godliness, and a respectable formalism, depending for its success upon the skillful management of a worldly policy.

The immediate cause of our difficulties is found, on the one hand, in the powerful revival of the work of holiness, which God has been pleased, for a few years past, to carry on within our bounds. This work has been attended, to some extent, with those physical manifestations which have so often been found in the history of the Church, where God has carried on his work in power. These features, objectionable to some, have by no means come up to what was known among the early Methodists; but they have been sufficient to create a prejudice, when presented in an exaggerated or distorted light.

On the other hand, members of the Conference who looked upon this work as fanatical, would naturally affiliate in their opposition to it, and in their endeavors to prevent its spread, and to crush it out of the Church where it had already gained a lodgment. So here at once was a development of two parties.

For proof upon the origin of our difficulties, we beg leave to refer you to Rev. E. Thomas, of your body; to the Rev's Asa Abell, John P. Kent, Amos Hard, and C. D. Burlingham. See also Protest to the Pastoral Address, signed L. Stiles, Jr.

We complain of the majority of the Genesee Annual

Conference of the M. E. Church, in respect to the following particulars :

I.—For adopting a Pastoral Address in which are, as we conceive, doctrines unmethodistic and anti-scriptural.

1. In relation to the standard of faith and practice.—Our Discipline says, page 30, that God's word "is the only rule, and the sufficient rule, both of our faith and practice." But they say, in the Pastoral Address adopted by them October 20th, 1858, page 7th, of the "law of our natures," that "inasmuch as God is no less the author of our nature and its laws, than of the Bible and the law of the Bible, it is entitled to be regarded as of collateral authority on this question." "This question" is one relating to spiritual manifestations.

2. *In relation to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.* In our communion service, we pray that God would "cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of his Holy Spirit." In our hymns, we often pray for His guidance; as in No. 367 :

"By the *teachings* of thy Spirit,
Guide us into perfect peace."

No. 595 :

"O ! may thy Spirit guide
My feet in ways of righteousness."

But the majority of the Genesee Conference say (Pastoral Address, page 9): "What *we* mean by *Fanaticism*, is: 1. The supposition of being under the *immediate guidance of the Holy Spirit* in matters of duty, and particularly as to conduct in seasons of worship."

That the Holy Spirit does guide us *indirectly*, through the Word, we admit; but we have always understood it to be a doctrine of Methodism, that the Holy Spirit does also vouchsafe *immediate guidance* to those who, deeply feeling its necessity, devoutly seek it by importunate prayer. Notice, they do not say that fanaticism is *the*

false supposition; but the bare "supposition," under any and all circumstances, of being under the "immediate guidance of the Holy Spirit in matters of duty," is "fanaticism." In opposition to this, the Bible says, most emphatically, "As many as are *led* by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

3. In relation to the doctrine of Holiness. They hold that it is simply a growth in grace—a maturity of virtues, acquired by pious habits, rather than a distinct work of the Holy Spirit. In proof of this, we refer to this fact: When the Rev. B. T. Roberts was arraigned, at the session of the Genesee Conference held at Le Roy, in the fall of 1857, for writing an article entitled "New-School Methodism," in which he said, "When they speak of 'holiness,' they mean by it the same as do evangelical ministers of other denominations, which do not receive the doctrines taught by Wesley and Fletcher on this subject," he offered, publicly, on the floor of the Conference, to publish in the papers a correction of his statements, if any one would say he had been misrepresented. No one alleged that he had been misrepresented. If ever silence means consent, it does under these circumstances.

4. In some of them fraternizing with Universalists and Unitarians.

At the session of the Conference held at Perry, in the fall of 1858, preachers were appointed to officiate at the the Universalist Church, the same as at evangelical churches. Last summer, one of the preachers belonging to the majority of the Genesee Conference, went to a Universalist Church and partook of the Communion, administered by a Universalist pastor, with these Universalists; and thus affiliated, in the most intimate act of Christian and Church fellowship, with those who deny the necessity of regeneration here in order for final salvation. For proof, see affidavits of D. H. Olney and Benjamin Baldwin. This

fact, though known to members of the Conference, called forth no expression of disapprobation. For proof on this point, we refer you to Rev. A. Kendall.

Last summer, the Niagara St. M. E. Church, in this city, took up their Sunday afternoon appointments and gave the use of their house to the Unitarians. After the announcement, the first week of the present session of the General Conference, that the Universalist and Unitarian pulpits would be supplied by delegates, the committee, composed of leading men of the majority of Genesee Conference, were requested to send a preacher to the Congregational Methodist Church in Albion, under the pastoral care of Rev. L. Stiles—a Church whose orthodoxy of faith is beyond question—and the reply was, “that it would not be consistent for us to do so, as he is opposed to us.” When asked, “If it would not be as consistent as it is to appoint a preacher for the Universalists?” the reply was, “We think not.” For proof on this point, we refer you to the Rev. Adam Poe.

II.—We complain of them for making new terms of membership, both in the Church and in the Conference.

1. It is a principle laid down by all our writers on Church polity, that the people have a check upon the ministers, in their power to withhold supplies. See “Essay on Church Polity,” by Rev. Abel Stevens, LL. D.; Dr. Bond’s “Economy of Methodism;” and Rev. A. N. Fillmore’s “Ecclesiastical Polity.”

In opposition to these views of our standard writers, they instruct their preachers to “let them know” who “through mistaken consciences,” do not pay the preacher, whatever his conduct may have been, that “they have no more place among us.” See Pastoral Address, page 12. In accordance with this direction, some of the oldest and most devoted members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Western New York, have been expelled, for the sole

reason that they could not, in conscience, give their money to support ministers who, as they believed, were pursuing an anti-Methodistic and unchristian course.

Thus, Rev. Claudius Brainard, of Chili, over forty years an ordained local elder of the M. E. Church—a quiet, in-offensive, conscientious man, of deep piety and good repute—was expelled for the above reason. The only complaint alleged against him was his participating in the action of the Laymen's Convention, held at Albion, December 1st and 2d, 1858.

Thomas Hannah, of the same place, who had recently paid for the erection of a new M. E. Church edifice some eight hundred dollars, was expelled for the same cause.

Jonathan Handly, of Perry—than whom no man can be found enjoying more fully the confidence of the community in which he has lived since a child; one who has filled with acceptability the office of class-leader for over thirty years—was expelled on the same ground.

James H. Brooks, of Olean—a man of sterling integrity, and of high standing in the community, where he has resided since boyhood; against whose character not a breath of suspicion has ever rested; to whose family, under God, Methodism is largely indebted for its prosperity in that region—was, on the same ground in reality, expelled from the Church of which, since youth, he has been a worthy member. (See *Olean Advertiser* of Feb'y 9th, 1860, article headed, "Expulsion of James H. Brooks from the Methodist Church.")

Many other instances of the same kind might be adduced.

2. At the last session, held at Brockport, October, 1859, the Genesee Conference passed certain test resolutions; and the characters of those preachers who would promise to be governed by them were passed, while preachers who could not subscribe to them were expelled. For the reso-

lutions, see Minutes, page 12. For proof, see statements of Rev. Wm. Cooley.

III.—*We complain of the leading men of the majority, for combining together not to take work unless Revs. Messrs. Stiles and Kingsley were removed from the cabinet.* Their object seems to have been, to get none appointed to the important office of Presiding Elder whose influence they could not command in furtherance of their worldly schemes.

Messrs. Stiles and Kingsley were popular and useful in their districts. For proof, see testimony of Messrs. Sanford Hunt, Wm. Barrett, and J. M. Fuller, taken on the trial of Rev. B. T. Roberts, at the Conference of 1858.—Mr. Barrett says: “I saw at the Medina Conference a petition, asking for the removal of Bro. Stiles and Kingsley from the office of Presiding Elder. I cannot state the wording of the petition, but understood it to be this, ‘that we would refuse to take work if Bros. Stiles and Kingsley were continued in the Presiding Elder’s office.’” Rev. J. M. Fuller testified that “he stated at the Medina Conference that he would not take work under either Bro. Stiles or Kingsley;” and also, “that he heard others say what would amount to about the same.” Rev. Sanford Hunt testifies that “he thinks there were over thirty names on that petition.” See Defense of Rev. B. T. Roberts. Also, call on Rev. S. C. Church.

IV.—We complain of them for holding secret meetings, in which matters pertaining to the Conference, and affecting the individual character of preachers, are virtually decided before they are presented to the Conference.

In proof of this, we refer you: 1. To the minutes of one of their secret meetings, kept by their own Secretary. These minutes were read on the trial of Rev. B. T. Roberts, at Perry, in open Conference, and their genuineness was never called in question. They read as follows:

LE ROY, September 3d, 1857.

"Meeting convened according to adjournment—Bro. Parsons in the chair. Prayer by Bro. Fuller.

"Brethren present pledged themselves, by rising, to keep to themselves the proceedings of the meeting.

"Moved, that we will not allow the character of Rev. B. T. Roberts to pass, until he has had a fair trial. Passed.

"Moved, that we will not pass the character of Rev. W. C. Kendall, until he has had a fair trial. Passed.

"Moved, that Bro. Carlton be added to the committee on Bro. Kendall's case. Passed."

We refer you: 2. To the testimony given by Revs. W. C. Willing, DeForest Parsons, and Thomas Carlton, on the trial of Rev. B. T. Roberts, at the Perry Conference, found in the Conference Journal for 1858; also, on the 19th, 20th, and 21st pages of "Defence." In this testimony, Mr. Parsons says: "I think the brethren *pledged* themselves, by a rising vote, to keep to themselves the proceedings of the meeting." Mr. Carlton says: "I attended three of the meetings at the house of John Ryan, during the session of the Medina Conference. I attended some of the select meetings at Le Roy, not all. . . My impression is, that at one of our meetings there was a person—either layman or preacher, I do not recollect which—not a member of our Conference, who was spoken to by a brother, and requested to leave, because we were talking of Conference matters, and it was not proper he should be with us. He spoke to him, and they went out. I should think there might have been sixty at one of those meetings; at another, about forty; they ranged from thirty to sixty."

V.—For refusing to entertain and investigate serious complaints made against some of their own number, though these complaints were made by responsible persons, and are susceptible, it is believed, of ample proof.

1. At the session of the Conference held at Medina, in the fall of 1856, Rev. L. Stiles, then Presiding Elder of Genesee District, stated to the Conference that he had letters, written by respectable persons—two of them members of our Church—calling in question the business honor and integrity of a member of the Conference; and asking that a committee be appointed to investigate the contents of the letters, to see whether the matters complained of were worthy of notice or not. But the Conference refused to hear the letters, or to have them referred to a committee. See Letters marked “A;” also statement of Enoch Pease.

2. At the session of the Genesee Conference held at Le Roy in the fall of 1857, complaints were made of the administration of Rev. A. D. Wilbor, at that time Presiding Elder of Genesee District. At one of the first Quarterly Meetings which Mr. Wilbor held after his appointment to the district, he permitted to be introduced into the Quarterly Conference, and to be passed, and to be ordered to be published in the *Northern Christian Advocate*, and in the *Buffalo Christian Advocate*, a preamble and resolutions, charging ministers and members in good standing in the M. E. Church, among other things, with “*claiming the gift of discerning spirits;*” with “seeking to disturb and divide the Church by publicly assailing the Christian character of her ministers and members;” with “making appointments for preaching in a Church without consulting its trustees or the preacher in charge, and contrary to his wishes, and availing themselves of that opportunity to villify and traduce the Church and her ministers;” and with being engaged in a movement, “factions, turbulent, contrary to the true spirit of Christianity, and dangerous to the highest interests of the Church of God.” Charges of mal-administration were preferred against Mr. Wilbor for thus allowing ministers or members, or both, to be condemned and executed, uncited, in their absence, by a tri-

bunal to which they were not responsible, and over which he presided. The majority—doubtless in accordance with the course agreed upon in their secret meetings—refused to entertain these charges, or to express any disapprobation of the unprecedented conduct of the Quarterly Conference. For the resolutions, see “Proceedings of Brockport Quarterly Conference;” and for Conference action, see the Journal for the year 1857. The Conference also refused to receive and to enter upon their Journal a Protest against their action, signed by six members of the Conference. See Protest.

3. At the session of the Conference held at Perry in the fall of 1858, a charge of dishonesty was preferred against the Rev. ——. He was accused of having bought a piece of Michigan land of John Pletcher, of Pekin, Niagara county, N. Y. After keeping it a few years he sold it, and persuaded Mr. Pletcher to give a deed directly to the man to whom he had sold it—assuring Mr. Pletcher that the taxes were paid; that there was no lien upon it, and that it should be no trouble or expense to him, the said Pletcher, but would save him, the said preacher, a good deal of trouble in getting his, the said preacher's, wife to sign the deed, as she was at a distance. A few months after signing this second deed, Mr. Pletcher received a notice from a man in Michigan, that he had bought this land on a sale for taxes. He acquainted the preacher of the fact, who replied, in substance, that if he had got himself into trouble, he must get out the best way he could. A difficulty thus arising, the parties agreed to leave the matter to three arbitrators. Rev. Thomas Carlton acted as counsel for the preacher, and Rev. D. B. Lawton as counsel for Mr. Pletcher. Rev. Glezen Fillmore, P. E. of the district, presided. Before the trial commenced, Mr. Carlton had the parties agree to abide by the decision of the arbitrators, whatever it might be. After a full examination of

the case, the arbitrators decided that the preacher should pay the expense Mr. Pleteher had been subjected to in consequence of signing the second deed. As soon as the verdict was rendered, Mr. Carlton insisted that there should be a new trial, and succeeded in having one ordered. At the second trial, each party was to choose two arbitrators, and the four select the fifth. By management, Mr. Carlton succeeded in getting his brother-in-law, Rev. Charles Shelling, appointed as the fifth arbitrator. The two arbitrators selected by the preacher were ministers; and they, with Mr. Shelling, brought in a verdict in favor of the preacher. This was a settlement of the matter in lieu of going to law.

The charge referred to above for the moral wrong involved in this transaction, was summarily dismissed.

For proof of facts here stated, see J. Pleteher's statement, and letter of Judge Sage. For proof that the preacher knew that the taxes were not paid, see letter of Tobias Byers. Also, inquire of I. M. Chesbrough. For Conference action, see Journal for 1858.

4. Charges were preferred against the Rev. J—— G. M——, at the last session of the Conference. One charge for falsehood was clearly proved by witnesses of good standing in the M. E. Church—men of unimpeached veracity. Yet the charge was voted *not sustained*. See Journal of Conference for 1859.

Another charge against the same preacher, for refusing to account for money raised in a collection taken up at the dedication of a Church, was dismissed because the witnesses were not present the day the Conference chose to take the matter up, although they were present the next day of the session. For proof of the disposal of the charge, see Conference Journal for 1859; also consult Rev. C. D. Brooks. For proof of charge, see affidavits of John Comstock and William Holmes.

Complaints have been made and charges preferred against other preachers, identified with the majority of the Genesee Conference; but, lest we be tedious, we will not go farther into details, but give the above cases as specimens. So uniform has been the acquittal of their partisans, that it has come to be understood, that it is a mere waste of time to attempt to bring one of them to justice at the bar of the Conference, unless he is notoriously guilty of some flagrant offense against society.

VI.—We complain of the majority of Genesee Conference, for their judicial action towards preachers who could not, in conscience, adopt their policy or subscribe to their measures, but who were laboring to promote old-fashioned Methodism.

1. At the session of the Genesee Conference held at Le Roy, in the fall of 1857, the Rev. B. T. Roberts, after coming within two votes of being elected Secretary, was arrested for “unchristian and immoral conduct,” for writing and publishing an article entitled “New-School Methodism.” This article was on the Conference difficulties, and was based upon two articles which appeared in the *Buffalo Advocate*—the organ of the majority. Before the trial commenced, Mr. Roberts said, in open Conference, that he honestly believed his article was true; but if the brethren referred to would say that they did not hold the sentiments he ascribed to them, he would gladly publish, in all the papers they desired, the needed correction. But no one claimed to have been misrepresented. The specifications contained language and sentiments not to be found in the article. In accordance with the plan agreed upon in the secret meetings referred to in the IVth general complaint, they voted the specifications and the charge sustained. By this decision, they, in effect, established the principle that a man may be held responsible for language he never used, and for sentiments he never uttered. After

sentencing him to be admonished by the chair, they passed his character—thus saying, by their action, that they had voted a brother guilty of “immoral conduct” when they did not believe him guilty; or that, in their judgment, “immoral conduct” did not unfit a man for being a Methodist traveling preacher.

For proof of Conference action, see Journal for 1857. For proof of action had on this case in secret meetings, see testimony adduced and IVth Complaint. Consult also Rev. C. D. Burlingham, Rev. C. P. Clark, Rev. A. McIntyre, and Rev. H. W. Annis.

2. At the session of the Conference held at Perry in the fall of 1858, the charge of “unchristian and immoral conduct” was again brought against the Rev. B. T. Roberts, for re-publishing or assisting in the re-publication of “New School Methodism,” and for publishing and circulating a document signed “George W. Estes.” The complainants did not prove that Mr. Roberts had anything to do with publishing the documents referred to. They brought forward only one witness—the Rev. John Bowman—to prove the circulation. He testified that Mr. Roberts handed him a package containing about three dozen. In his defence, Mr. Roberts showed that if he had published and circulated the documents complained of, it would not be immoral conduct, for the statements made in them were generally true; and in the second place, he impeached the veracity of Rev. John Bowman as a witness, and showed that whatever the nature of the documents, the prosecution had failed to prove either publication or circulation. Yet on the testimony of this one witness, thus impeached, Rev. B. T. Roberts was expelled from the Conference and the Church. See Journal of 1858. For impeachment, see testimony of Rev. John Bowman, page 24th of Defence, compared with testimony of Revs. Wm. Barrett, R. E. Thomas, S. C. Church, and E. S. Furman, on 25th page of

Defence. See also letter of Rev. John Bowman to Rev. L. Stiles.

3. At the same session, Rev. J. McCreery was expelled on the same charge and specifications. He offered to show that an *ex parte* report of the trial of Rev. B. T. Roberts had been published in the *Buffalo Advocate*; that this Estes pamphlet was designed to correct this report and to let the people know what was the immorality of which he had been voted guilty. He also wished to show that the pamphlet had been circulated generally by preachers of both sides. In both points he was overruled—voted guilty of “immoral conduct,” and expelled from the Conference and the M. E. Church.

4. At the last session of the Genesee Conference, held at Brockport in the fall of 1859, Rev. L. Stiles was expelled from the Conference and the M. E. Church on the charge of “contumacy,” for participating with B. T. Roberts in religious services, and for preaching at Holley and organizing a class there—it being, as was claimed, within the bounds of another preacher’s charge.

In his defence, Mr. Stiles showed that Mr. Roberts had, at the time he associated with him in religious meetings, an exhorter’s license, duly given by a preacher of the Genesee Conference, who had just closed a term of service in the Presiding Elder’s office. He admitted the fact of preaching the Gospel and getting sinners saved at Holley; but showed, in justification, that for nine years Holley had been abandoned by the preachers of the adjoining circuit. He also showed that our Discipline requires preachers to “go always, not only to those that want you, but to those that want you most. Observe! it is not your business only to preach so many times, and to take care of this or that society, but to save as many as you can; to bring as many sinners as you can to repentance, and with all your power to build them up in that holiness, without which

they cannot see the Lord." Thus was this devoted servant of God expelled from the Conference and the Church. So contrary to the spirit of Christianity was the treatment he, with others, had received, and such strong grounds had the bishops and the official editors taken in support of the Conference action, and so confident was the prediction that a hearing could not be had at the General Conference, that he felt he could not, as a mere matter of form, take an appeal. See Conference Journal for 1859.

5. Rev. C. D. Burlingham, at the same session, was expelled, for receiving B. T. Roberts on probation; and for assisting, one Sabbath, in a meeting held in a Wesleyan Methodist Church, in which meeting Messrs. Roberts and McCreery participated. It was also alleged that the Presiding Elder was holding a regular Quarterly Meeting at the same time—about three miles distant—within the bounds of the same charge.

In justification of his course in receiving B. T. Roberts, Mr. Burlingham stated that a society meeting unanimously recommended his reception. He felt covered by Bishop Baker, who says, in his Guide Book, page 159, "When a member or preacher has been expelled," "if the society become convinced of the *innocence* of the expelled member, he may again be received on trial without confession." He stated that he did not know that the P. E. had a meeting in the same charge at the same time; that no disrespect was intended in either case, either to the Conference or to the Presiding Elder. He went to the verge of conscience in making concessions; but his doom was sealed, and he was expelled. See Journal for 1859.

6. At the same session, Rev. Wm. Cooley was expelled for "receiving into his pulpit and treating as a minister an expelled member from this Conference;" and for attending a camp-meeting held at Brockport by Fay H. Purdy, during the session of the Conference.

Mr. Cooley admitted that at a meeting held in his charge, Mr. Roberts was present and exhorted; and at another time, Mr. McCreery, without being invited, addressed the people, as he said, on his own authority.

Rev. J. A. Wells was also expelled at the same session, for "holding religious meetings in connection with B. T. Roberts," and for "going into the bounds of other brethren's charges, and holding religious meetings." He showed in his defence, that B. T. Roberts, after his expulsion, had joined on trial, and received a license to exhort; and as an exhorter he received him. He also showed that not one of the preachers on whose charges he had preached, had ever intimated that they were displeased with his preaching within their bounds. But nothing could save him. He was expelled from the Conference and the M. E. Church.

Revs. H. H. Farnsworth and J. W. Reddy, for the same reasons, were, under pain of expulsion, compelled to locate at the same session.

VII.—We complain of the administration upon their respective charges, of some of the majority of the Genesee Conference.

1. In expelling from the Church on frivolous prettexts, worthy members, simply because they could not give their countenance to the unchristian course pursued by some of the ministers. As specimens, we refer you to the expulsion of Seymour J. Nobles, of Olean. See *Olean Advertiser*. Consult also Rev. John Stainton, Rev. A. Kendall.

The expulsion of Mrs. Julia Knowlton, of Lockport.—Consult Mr. Gitchell. See also her printed trial.

2. In pronouncing members withdrawn without their knowledge or consent, and contrary to their wishes—thus excluding members in good standing from the Church without even the form of a trial.

This has been done to a considerable extent, and in a

number of places. For proof, we refer to Rev. John Stainton, of Perry; A. Ames, of Ridgeville; — Parker, of Spring Brook, and J. H. Jones, of Niagara Falls.

3. In removing from official stations men of piety and experience, through whose labors the Church has been sustained, and filling their places with men of poor reputation for personal sanctity, and whose sole qualification consists in their submission to the wishes of the majority. For proof, we refer you to the testimony of S. S. Rice, J. A. Wells, Geo. W. Holmes, L. A. Halstead.

4. In proscribing religious meetings not under their immediate control. See *Niagara City Herald*, of Oct. 8th, 1859. Consult also I. M. Chesbrough.

VIII.—We complain of the slanderous reports they publish and circulate, respecting those who are contending for primitive Methodism. Thus the Pastoral Address, page 7th, says: "The meeting at Beech Lane was a bear-garden full of noise, howling, cursing, swearing, blasphemy, and confusion." On the 8th page it says, some of the various phases of enthusiasm "we have noticed above, and which, with *immaterial* variations, are occasionally manifest among us."

One of the preachers who assisted in the expulsion of Rev. L. Stiles for "contumacy," reported that he was expelled for "lying." See affidavits. See also article in the *Medina Tribune*, written by Rev. J. B. Wentworth.

IX.—We complain of them for the disposition they make of the money raised for superannuated preachers, their widows and orphans; giving to the claimants upon this fund, who will support their measures, a much larger proportion than they are entitled to, either from their services or their necessities. In the case of one worthy claimant, they last year deprived him of all claim, without a vote of the Conference, and without his consent, because he did not answer in a manner satisfactory to the commit-

tee on claims, certain test questions which they were pleased to ask him.

For proof, we refer you to the Minutes of the Genesee Conference for 1859, page 5th. There you will see that I. Chamberlayne received \$150; J. P. Kent, \$75; R. M. Evarts, \$80; B. Williams, \$75; A. Hard, \$100; Widow Hoag, \$100; Widow Alverson, \$100; Widow Kendall, \$50. I. Chamberlayne is, we suppose, in as good circumstances as A. Hard, and is worth considerable more than either of the following three. Of the Widows, Mrs. Kendall is worth the least. See also statement of Rev. A. Hard.

Therefore, your memorialists respectfully ask that the judicial action of the Genesee Conference, by which six of its members, to wit: Revs. B. T. Roberts, J. McCreery, Jr., L. Stiles, Jr., C. D. Burlingham, J. A. Wells, and Wm. Cooley, were expelled, and two others located, to wit: H. H. Farnsworth and J. W. Reddy—may be reversed, and these brethren may be restored to their former standing in the ministry; and that such safeguards against such action in the future may be adopted as your wisdom shall suggest.

SAMUEL C. CHURCH,
A. KENDALL,

C. D. BURLINGHAM,
B. T. ROBERTS.

The undersigned, though differing from the above-named persons, as to the expediency of bringing into this memorial a few of the statements contained therein, do nevertheless, mostly from our own painful knowledge of the state of things within our bounds, and partly from what we regard as reliable information, judge that the statements of the above memorial are true; and we hereby join with the above memorialists in asking the appropriate redress.

ASA ABELL,
A. HARD,

J. P. KENT,
R. COOLEY.

CHAPTER X.

THE General Conference—upon which so many anxious eyes were turned, on account of the Genesee difficulties, in the hope that all would there be made right—commenced its session May 1st, 1860, in the city of Buffalo, and continued its deliberations during the entire month.

Things had now reached a crisis. The long-pending appeal of the Rev. B. T. Roberts was now to be disposed of, by the action of the highest judiciary of the Church from which he had been expelled; and questions of deep and lasting interest were suspended, it was clearly seen, upon the decision of that case.

The elements of society within the bounds of the Old Genesee Conference, and in some directions far beyond those limits, were stirred to their profoundest depths by what had occurred. The Buffalo Regency—as an aspiring, unscrupulous, secret-society clan, belonging to the Conference, were called—were doing all in their power to prejudice the Church and community against their intended victims, preparatory to their final and complete overthrow upon the General Conference floor; and a widespread storm was gathering in the moral heavens, which threatened to break upon the people with most disastrous consequences.

Under these circumstances, the Conference opened; and many were the members and spectators who hung upon the scene in breathless doubt of the course they would take on the subject of the difficulties about to come before them. It was soon apparent, however, that the spirit of

early Methodism had departed from that venerable body, and another spirit than that of the fathers—the spirit of a worldly, ambitious, temporizing policy—ruled the hour. The delegates belonging to secret societies, and those of a pro-slavery type, making common cause of it, refused, by a majority vote which they contrived to command, to entertain Mr. Roberts' appeal, though in bare-faced opposition to one of our strictest rules; and, of course, this devoted ambassador of the Lord Jesus Christ, in accordance with the action of the Genesee Conference in his case, stood expelled from the Church!!! Heaven wept!—the friends of Jesus heaved a heart-felt sigh! The Regency party shouted over their guilty victory—congratulating themselves that the voice of holy admonition and reproof, which had given them so much inquietude, was now silenced! and hell, forever in sympathy with such-like Jesuitical movements, held high jubilee on the occasion!

The remarks of Rev. William Hosmer, upon the atrocious illegality of the action of the General Conference in regard to the appeal of Mr. Roberts, and Mr. Burlingham—who also took an appeal to that body—are so just and appropriate, that we cannot forbear to introduce them at this point. They are as follows:

From the Northern Independent.

THE COURT OF APPEALS—A STRANGE DECISION.

Methodism has taught us to live in the presence of God, and to shape all our acts under the inspection of his eye. Whatsoever cannot abide this test, must be discarded and abhorred, because it will surely be condemned in "the eternal judgment" to which we are hastening. That the Court of appeals, constituted by the last General Conference, did not do its work so as to secure either divine or human respect, is a conclusion forced upon us from every view we have been able to take of the subject. Gladly

would we pass by these judicial proceedings without further notice, if it were allowable. But they are of too serious a character, and will be found too far reaching in their consequences, to admit of silent acquiescence. Ecclesiastical courts are not famous for liberality and justice; but we believe the courts of Methodism have not generally sunk to the level indicated by the trial of these appeals.

First in order, was the case of Rev. C. D. Burlingham. He was expelled from the Genesee Conference and the M. E. Church for doing three things:

1st. Admitting B. T. Roberts into the Church on trial.

2d. Licensing him to exhort.

3d. Officiating with expelled preachers at a general quarterly meeting held in a Wesleyan Church, at the same time that his Presiding Elder was holding a regular quarterly meeting in the same charge, about three miles distant.

Mr. Burlingham admitted the facts alleged, but pleaded in justification,

1st. That he received B. T. Roberts, and licensed him to exhort, on the unanimous recommendation of the society meeting of the Church with which Mr. Roberts had last labored. In this action he believed he was covered by Bishop Baker, who says, in his work on Discipline, page 159, "If, however, the society become convinced of the *innocence* of the expelled member, he may again be received on trial, without confession."

2d. That when he engaged to attend the general quarterly meeting, he supposed that Mr. Roberts had a right, as an exhorter, to hold meetings.

3d. That he did not know that the M. E. Church had a society, or an appointment, in the place where the general quarterly meeting was held. He supposed the ground was occupied exclusively by the Wesleyans.

These were the only offenses with which Mr. Burlingham was charged.

After his expulsion he waited silently for the General Conference. He did not preach, nor lecture, nor exhort—did not attend meetings held by expelled preachers—but did *penance* up to the session of the General Conference. He should have been restored on the ground of having expiated his guilt, if he were guilty of any ordinary offence, if on no other. When his appeal came up, Mr. Fuller, who had been chief prosecutor in all those trials, challenged several of the committee who had manifested a desire to have Genesee Conference matters fairly investigated. Though the General Conference, in constituting the committee, or Court of Appeals, had given to parties the right to challenge *for cause*, yet Mr. Fuller, after the first instance, was not required to give *cause*, but challenged as many as he chose, *and they were set aside*. He simply said of the challenged, “he considered them prejudiced.”

Mr. Olin, of the Oneida Conference, managed the case for Mr. Burlingham with consummate tact and great ability. His plea was a masterly effort, and carried conviction to the minds, we believe, of all who heard it, except the committee. *They sent the case back to the Genesee Conference for a new trial*. This we regard as a remarkable decision. Neither party asked for it. We never heard before of a case being remanded for a new trial, unless there was some alleged informality in the court below, or defect in the record, or unless one or the other of the parties claimed to have new testimony which could not be introduced into the first trial. But nothing of the kind was intimated in this case. There can be no new testimony, for Mr. Burlingham admitted all the facts with which he was charged.

Do these facts, mentioned above, constitute a crime, for which an able minister, of spotless reputation, who has served the Church for over twenty years, devoting the

vigor of his manhood's prime in self-sacrificing efforts to promote her interests, should be expelled? Then let the General Conference say so, that all who henceforth enter the Methodist ministry, may understand that they are expected to lay their manhood in the dust, part with the right of private judgment, and yield a servile, unquestioning obedience to all the behests of their ecclesiastical superiors.

Was Mr. Burlingham, through party malignity, treated unjustly? Was he wrongfully deposed from the ministry, and excluded from the Church? Then the General Conference should have restored him. This was due to him; it was due to outraged justice; it was due to the M. E. Church, whose Discipline—confessedly more susceptible of abuse than that of any other Church in this country—has been used for the purpose of inflicting ecclesiastical oppression without a parallel in the nineteenth century.

But the General Conference, through its committee, or Court of Appeals, after gravely listening to the testimony and pleadings, sent the case back for a new trial, without a motion to that effect from either party. *What*, we ask, is there to try? There can be no issue on the facts—these are admitted.

But Mr. Burlingham contends that these facts do not constitute a crime for which he should be deposed from the ministry, and expelled from the Church.

The Genesee Conference has said that they do. Here is the issue—who shall decide? The Discipline vests the power in the General Conference—the body to try appeals. The case was properly brought before them, and they have sent it back, for the Genesee Conference to decide over again. What an absurd decision! What an insult to Mr. Burlingham, and to common sense! Suppose the views of law and justice entertained by the Genesee Conference remain unchanged, and the same sentence be

again pronounced against Mr. Burlingham, and he again appeals. After waiting four years for another General Conference, if he still survive, there will not only be the same reason for sending the case back for a new trial as now, but the additional one of precedent. Thus, this mockery of justice may continue *ad infinitum*.

This looks more like the tiger playing with the victim he intends to devour, than like a body of Christian ministers, bound by every consideration that can influence to right action, to "judge righteous judgment."

Another fact is worthy of especial notice. Though the decision in the case was not asked for *in court* by either party, yet it is precisely what partisans of the Regency party of the Genesee Conference have been endeavoring for months to persuade Mr. Burlingham to consent to.—These efforts were continued up to the morning of the day on which the appeal was heard. Yet neither in their pleadings, nor at any time while the appeal was being heard, did the counsel for the Conference signify their wish that the case might be remanded for a new trial. At whose suggestion was it done? When was the suggestion made? Was there any collusion in the matter? It is impossible for us to answer these questions. View it in whatever light you may, the whole case has a dark and suspicious aspect.

Perhaps some clue to an explanation of the strange proceedings in relation to the Genesee Conference appeal cases, may be found in the action had upon the slavery question.

The Genesee Conference has heretofore been one of the strongest anti-slavery Conferences in the connection. The proscribed party have, from the first, been uncompromising in their hostility to slavery in the Church and in the State.

The Genesee delegates to the late General Conference were once regarded as anti-slavery; what they are now,

their votes will show. We asserted last fall, that the Conference had become pro-slavery, and gave as proof, the fact that while it condemned this paper, it refused to take any action against slavery. The truth of our inference was denied by some; but the recent course of their delegates has made our words good. When the important question was decided in the General Conference upon a change of the constitution, so as to prohibit slave-holding in the Church, the delegates of the Genesee Conference voted against a change, *and their vote turned the scale.*—And when the Genesee Conference matters came up, *the border pro-slavery delegates voted solid with the representatives of the majority of the Genesee Conference.* This may be all fair. It may be that men who, four years ago, took the stump to keep slavery out of the territories, have suddenly become convinced that it should be nestled and fostered in the bosom of the Church! We should like to know by what arguments they were converted, and when it was done! Was this a part of a scheme to keep slaveholders in the Church? Did the border understand, that if they voted as desired by the Genesee delegates, they would reciprocate the favor, and assist them in their extremity? Or did this strange coincidence come about by chance?

GENESEE CONFERENCE APPEAL CASES.

Our opinion of the late trials in the Genesee Conference has been given in these columns, and need not be repeated here. We have also expressed our views freely in relation to the action of the Court of Appeals in one case. It only remains that we refer to its doings in another case—for though the others were ostensibly expelled for different causes, the real cause was one and the same in all cases.

At the session of the Genesee Conference held at Le Roy, 1857, B. T. Roberts was voted guilty of “immoral conduct,”

for publishing in the *Northern Independent* an article entitled "New School Methodism," in which were reviewed some articles which had appeared in the *Buffalo Advocate*. From this decision Mr. Roberts appealed, on the ground that his sentiments and language were grossly perverted; that he did not say nor mean what was alleged in the bill of charges. At the next session of the Genesee Conference, he was expelled for "contumacy," for publishing and circulating a second edition of "New School Methodism," together with a short account of the first trial. From this decision he appealed, on the grounds that neither the publication nor circulation were proved, and if they had been, it would not have constituted a sufficient reason for expulsion, inasmuch as the document was substantially true.

The opposing counsel made strong opposition to having the first appeal entertained, but for some reason he did not succeed. The committee, after hearing the document read, were equally divided on the question of affirming the decision of the Genesee Conference. They stood balanced in judgment as to whether a Methodist minister should or should not be held responsible for the *perversion* which his enemies might be pleased to put upon his language!

When his second appeal case came up, Mr. Roberts began to exercise his right of challenging members of the committee. Two who were challenged were set aside.—He was then not permitted to challenge any farther, though he assigned as the cause, that some of the jury had committed themselves against him, and published hostile articles in the papers.

Against entertaining this second and more important appeal, a still more determined opposition was made. The representatives of the Genesee Conference, by their solicitude, betrayed the conviction that if the appeal was heard, the decision could but be reversed. They had succeeded in breaking up the committee appointed to investigate

Genesee Conference affairs, and now all they had to do to prevent the light from shining in upon their doings, was to shut out the appeal.

Dr. Curry and Mr. Hatfield, counsel for Mr. Roberts, presented unanswerable arguments why the case should be heard upon its merits, but their eloquence was exerted in vain. The appeal was not heard by the General Conference, and Mr. Roberts gave notice that he appealed "to God and the people."

We think we can satisfy every unprejudiced person that a great wrong was done, in not allowing the appeals to be prosecuted.

1st. *The Discipline guarantees, in the most express terms, the right of appeal.* The 5th of the restrictive rules, which limit the power of the General Conference, says: "*They shall not do away the privileges of our ministers or preachers, of trial by a committee, and of an appeal.*" This language is plain. The General Conference "SHALL NOT," either in their legislative or judicial capacity, "DEPRIVE MINISTERS OF THE RIGHT OF APPEAL." This is a part of the Constitution—the highest law of the Church. The only limitation, in any other part of the Discipline, to this right, is found on the 93d page, which reads, "*Provided, nevertheless, that in all the above-mentioned cases of trial and conviction, an appeal to the General Conference SHALL BE ALLOWED, if the condemned person signify his intention to appeal, at the time of his condemnation, or at any time thereafter when he is informed thereof.*" What can be more explicit? A right, secured in express terms, can be taken away only in terms equally express and unambiguous. There is no right more sacred than that of appeal. The General Conference cannot, without violating the plainest provisions of the constitution, and the law of the Church, refuse to entertain an appeal duly notified.

2d. The General Conference *assumes powers which do*

not belong to it, when they make the right to have an appeal heard depend upon anything the appellant has done since the decision from which he appeals.

In doing this, they must first try the appellant upon his general conduct since his trial, from the decision of which he appeals, in order to determine whether his appeal shall be entertained or not! But the Discipline does not give the General Conference original jurisdiction over any of the ministers except the bishops. They have no more right than Judge Lynch has, to try a preacher, unless his case comes before them on an appeal, and then they must be confined to the testimony taken in the lower court.

If the conduct of an expelled preacher pending his appeal, has not been correct, let him, if unjustly deposed, be restored, and then he is responsible to his Conference for his actions while suspended. The General Conference is authorized to try *appeal cases*, but not preachers. For them to undertake to do that, is an unwarrantable and odious assumption of power.

What does the right of appeal amount to, if the security of its exercise depends upon the prejudice or caprice of a majority of a committee?

3d. The appeal of Mr. Roberts should have been heard, *because the majority was committed against him BEFORE ANY COMPLAINT WAS MADE OR CHARGE PREFERRED.*

There is nothing guarded with greater jealousy by the common law, than the impartiality of juries. A person put upon trial before its tribunals, may challenge all day, "for cause." Let it be shown, that the jury had by any acts, committed themselves before the trial, and the verdict would be set aside.

The necessity of an impartial jury is as great in ecclesiastical as in criminal trials—when character, as well as life, is at stake. The credit of religion, as well as the security of the individual, demands no less. A verdict

obtained by connivance, or by partisan excitement, is none the more to be respected because it was rendered under religious forms, and by men professing godliness.

It is well known that at the time of these trials, the Genesee Conference was divided into two parties; that this partisan feeling, which had existed for years, was wrought up to the greatest intensity; that at the Conference which instituted the first of these trials, the party opposed to the appellant, for the first time became a majority, several of the opposite party having been transferred to other Conferences; and that it was by this accidental, excited, and thoroughly partisan majority, that Mr. Roberts was tried. This being the case, and the trial resulting as it did, if there ever was an instance where the corrective agency of an appellate court was needed, that case was the one under consideration.

If there is any analogy between an ecclesiastical court and a civil court, then the necessity was even greater than we have stated; and so far from not entertaining the appeal, the court should have annulled the previous trial, and sent the case back for a new investigation, if a trial was judged to be necessary. But, admitting the validity of the action of the court below, we see not how it was possible for this appellate court to refuse to entertain the appeal. The hearing of cases is not optional with such a court—an appeal always lies, if the party appealing gives due notice of his intention, and is on hand to prosecute his claims. Not to entertain an appeal is, therefore, a palpable dereliction from duty; and, in this instance, it was equivalent to saying that, so far as these expelled brethren were concerned, there should be no appellate court in the M. E. Church—thus practically annihilating one of the most important branches of our judiciary, and rendering it forever impossible to correct the errors of the court below. Well might the appellant stand aghast at such

treatment, and make his appeal to God and the people. The judicial infatuation which has rendered it necessary to transfer this and other like cases, from an earthly to a heavenly tribunal, we deplore, but cannot help. The deed is done, and with all its appalling consequences, the record must go up to God. We have the satisfaction of knowing that we have not been awed by authority, nor terrified by threats, into silence in the presence of such wrongs. The senseless, shameless cry of "Naziritism," we fling back with the hearty contempt which it merits. Those who indulge in this low style of abuse, should remember that there are people in the world who are not afraid of slang, and who will not desert the innocent because malice, for accomplishment of its own purposes, heaps upon them disparaging epithets. To defend the injured should be regarded as a virtue, not as a crime; and whatever the meanness or the madness of persecution may inflict, we had far rather share it with the oppressed, than betray them to the clutches of a relentless tyranny.

This General Conference forms an *epoch* in the history of Methodism. Other General Conferences have had their importance, both in respect to men, and measures; but that of 1860, besides opening the door to unrestrained Church-slavery, by removing the last disciplinary barrier to its existence—Romanizing the ritual of the Church, and favoring some other worldly-wise abominations—gave their sanction, and virtually pledged their patronage and support, to "New School Methodism." An epoch indeed in the history of Methodism; since it involves nothing less than a radical change in the system: a change which supersedes the Methodism of Wesley—"Christianity in earnest"—and replaces it with a smooth, formal, fashionable religion, whose very insignia and watch-word is popularity.

Yet this same General Conference was not without its use; the hand of Providence was there; and the Conference, corrupt as it was, *incidentally* sent forth a stream of "living waters"—a mighty river, whose waters shall roll on, with widening banks and deepening channel and swelling tide, to the end of time. The so-called "Nazarites," who never thought of a separate existence before, now losing all hope of reconciliation with the old Church, resolved upon an independent organization. They felt they were shut out from all sympathy on the part of a Church which had thrust many of them from her bosom—their leaders in particular—with such illegal and malignant violence; and that they had no alternative left them but to provide for themselves.

Long did an insulted Heaven wait for the return of the Old Church from her wanderings; *and never till her accumulated abominations had taken sanctuary under the wing of the General Conference, and the shield of impunity had been thrown over them by the supreme council of the Church*, did either God or the Free Methodists forsake her. It was under these circumstances, that the Lord called his oppressed ones out of bondage, "leading them in the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation."

It is not pretended that there are no living Christians in the Methodist Episcopal Church. We are happy to recognize a considerable number among the members generally, and here and there one among the preachers, who evidently enjoy the life and power of religion—though we think the latter exceedingly scarce, and see little chance for the former long to "maintain their integrity." But it is too clear that the Church in general—being instigated to courses of worldliness and folly and persecution of "the way of holiness," by their money-loving, pleasure-taking, would-be-popular leaders—are incorrigibly fallen; and that, as a body, God has cast them off.

CHAPTER XI.

HAVING now shown the occasion there was for the formation of the Free Methodist Church, and the circumstances under which she was called into being; we shall come more directly to the fact of her organization, already presupposed or implied, and the consideration of her peculiar economy as a separate and independent Christian Church.

As it relates to their organization—which, in a manner, they were compelled to go into at the time they did—the Rev. Mr. Phelps, who participated with them in the movement, gives the following brief account:

“In accordance with the provisions of the last Laymen’s Convention, a Delegated Convention was called at Pekin, Niagara county, N. Y., August 23d, 1860, to confer as to the best mode of extending the work which God had so graciously begun among them. The Convention was called to order, and opened with devotional exercises.—Isaac M. Chesbrough of Pekin, was elected Chairman, and Rev. A. A. Phelps, Secretary. The body, duly organized, was composed of sixty members—fifteen preachers, and forty-five laymen. Most of the business was transacted on the camp-ground—a spot newly consecrated by the outpouring of God’s Spirit and the salvation of precious souls. The deliberations of the Convention resulted in the organization of the Free Methodist Church, and the adoption of their first Discipline.”

The same account, a little more extended, will be seen in the subjoined preface to the Discipline aforesaid, (edition for 1860,) as follows:

ORIGIN OF THE FREE METHODIST CHURCH.

The Free Methodist Church had its origin in necessity and not in choice. It did not grow out of a secession, nor out of an unsuccessful attempt to bring about a reform in the government of the Church. Those concerned in its formation never expected a separation from the Methodist Episcopal Church, until they were unjustly excluded from its pale. They sought redress at the proper tribunal. It was not granted. Even a candid hearing was denied them. Thus thrown out, and the possibility of a restoration being cut off, and believing that God still called them to labor for the salvation of souls, they had no alternative but to form a new organization. In doctrine, discipline, and spirit, they were Methodists, and hence they could not offer themselves to any other organization.

The issue on which they were thrust out, was between dead formalism and the life and power of godliness, and so they could not feel at home with those branches of the Methodist Family into whose formation other questions mainly entered.

Jesus has always had a people—a plain, humble, earnest people—to preach the Gospel to the poor, and to spread scriptural holiness throughout the world. We believe the Methodists were raised up for this purpose. God was with them, and gave them great success in saving souls.

But as they grew strong and wealthy, pride, and a love of popularity, crept in among them. The Discipline was too generally unheeded. It became obvious to the most casual observer, that there was, among many of the ministers and members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States, a very wide and growing departure from the original spirit of Methodism. This departure is also seen in the alterations that have been recently made in the Discipline.

In 1852, the rule requiring our houses of worship to be

built "plain, and with free seats," was effectually neutralized by adding the words, "wherever practicable." Conformity to the world was greatly encouraged in 1856, by repealing *the law* which had stood in the Discipline from the first, forbidding the reception of members until they had laid off "superfluous ornaments," and substituting a simple exhortation to "conform to the spirit of the apostolic precept"—as though plain commands of God could be violated without violating their spirit.

In the Genesee Conference, this departure from the old paths was hastened by the connection of several of its prominent members with secret societies. These, bound together by a tie unknown to the rest of the body, and laying their plans in the strictest secrecy, formed a solid nucleus, around which the formal and the aspiring naturally rallied. A portion of the Conference wished to adhere to primitive Methodism. They loved the doctrine of holiness, and preached it with success. Their labors were prospered, and their services were sought for. While they had the countenance of the bishops, they were unmolested.

At the General Conference of the M. E. Church, held in 1856, the bishops took a decided stand against the enactment of a law excluding slave-holders from the Church. The secret-society, worldly-policy members of the Genesee Conference, some of whom had been radical abolitionists, sided with the bishops on the slavery question. At its next session, thirty of them combined together not to take work, unless Rev. L. Stiles, and Rev. I. C. Kingsley—men whose sympathies and labors were for the promotion of spiritual religion—were removed from the cabinet.—They were transferred, and their places supplied by such men as the thirty (who, with their adherents, were henceforth known as "The Regency,") could render subservient to their purposes.

But the work of holiness went on. Dead and formal

ministers were in no better demand than before. At the next session of the Genesee Conference, in a secret meeting held by the Regency, they voted to bring Rev. B. T. Roberts and Rev. W. C. Kendall to trial. Charges were preferred. Mr. Roberts was voted guilty of "immoral and unchristian conduct," for publishing in the *Northern Independent*, in an article entitled "New School Methodism," things that were not in that article, or in any other that he ever wrote.

His character was then passed, and he was sent out to preach. For the want of time, Mr. Kendall's trial was deferred. At the next Conference, held in Perry in October, 1858, secret meetings of the Regency were held, as had been done at the two preceding sessions. Mr. Roberts was charged with "contumacy," for publishing and circulating a second edition of "New School Methodism," and a pamphlet signed by "Geo. W. Estes," which gave a short account of the trial of the year preceding. On this charge, and on the testimony of only one witness, whose veracity was fully impeached, Mr. Roberts was expelled from the Conference and from the M. E. Church. Rev. Joseph McCreery was also expelled at the same time on the same charges.

Called of God to preach, they could not cease because the human authority with which they had been invested was thus taken away. The members of the Church who had witnessed their labors and their spirit, thought they should still endeavor to save their fellow-men. One hundred and ninety-five prominent laymen met in convention at Albion, December 1st, 1858, and passed resolutions, expressing their entire and unabated confidence in the expelled preachers, and recommending them to continue to labor for the salvation of souls.

At the next session of the Genesee Conference, held at Brockport in October, 1858, Reverends L. Stiles, C. D.

Burlingham, J. A. Wells, and W. Cooley, were expelled for "contumacy," in sympathizing with those who had been expelled the year preceding. Reverends J. W. Reddy and H. H. Farnsworth were located for the same cause.

Members of the Church, who manifested an active sympathy with the expelled preachers, were themselves expelled in large numbers. Many were, without their consent, and contrary to their wishes, read out by the preachers as "withdrawn." Among both these classes were many of undoubted piety, and of long standing in the Church, who had contributed largely, by their influence, to its prosperity, and whose love for it was unabated.

Fifteen hundred members, within the bounds of the Genesee Conference, respectfully petitioned the General Conference, at its session in Buffalo, in May, 1860, to investigate the judicial action of the Genesee Conference. A committee of forty-two was appointed for this purpose.—A memorial, setting forth the grievances complained of, and affidavits and documents substantiating the complaints, were presented. A determined effort to get the committee discharged was made by the partisans of the majority of Genesee Conference. *The committee was discharged, and investigation was suppressed.*

The appeal cases were summarily disposed of. That of the Rev. C. D. Burlingham—who, from the time of his expulsion, desisted from all public efforts to do good to the souls of men—was, without the shadow of reason, sent back for a new trial. Upon the first appeal of Mr. Roberts—that from the verdict of reproof—the committee stood equally divided. The other appeals were not entertained, though the constitution of the M. E. Church declares, in the most emphatic manner, that the General Conference shall not deprive the ministers of the privilege of appeal.

The same General Conference authorized the preachers

to go beyond the bounds of their charge to obtain a committee to try their members.

Under this new rule, the work of expulsion went on.—Pious men, long known for their strong attachment to Methodism, who were too conscientious and God-fearing to give their sanction to what they believed to be great iniquities, were excommunicated.

Committees, imported from a distance for the purpose, expelled, after the mockery of a trial, devoted men of God. All hope of a change for the better being cut off, and it being evident that the authorities of the Methodist Episcopal Church were determined to put down what devout souls believed to be the work of God, a convention of laymen and ministers met at Pekin, Niagara county, N. Y., on the 22d of August, 1860, and adopted the following form of Discipline.

We do not wish any to subscribe to it unless they believe it will be for the glory of God and the salvation of their souls. We have no desire to get up simply a large Church; but we hope that our societies will be composed, *exclusively*, of those who are *in earnest to gain heaven*, and who *are determined, by the grace of God, to live up to the requirements of the Bible.*

Where societies already organized design to unite with the Free Methodist Church, we recommend that they adopt the Discipline as a whole; and then, that each member be admitted in his individual capacity, as provided for in section third of chapter first, entitled, "Of receiving members into the Church."

It is of the greatest importance that those who come into the new organization be of one heart and one mind.

It appears from what we have before introduced on the subject, that the Free Methodists formed themselves into little, independent bands—or churches, if you please—

during their transition state, as at St. Louis and Albion—the indications of Providence pointing in that direction. Such a measure, as well for their own preservation as for the advantages it afforded them in the work of saving others, was, for the time being, wisely adopted. But no sooner did Methodism—which they had long been accustomed to cherish and follow as “a creature of Providence”—look towards a *connectional* organization, than they all went into it, lay and clerical, “with one heart and with one mind.” Henceforth, therefore, we shall treat of them, not as fragmentary, isolated groups—a condition they occupied in their incipient history—but as a regularly constituted Christian Church, united together in one body, and laboring for the advancement of the cause of God under one and the same ecclesiastical organization. “This is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.” He alone has ushered in this new epoch in ecclesiastical history.

CHAPTER XII.

WE are now prepared to enter directly upon the history of the Free Methodist Church; the foregoing pages having simply paved the way for the execution of this part of our work. The history of our young Church *direct*, however, must necessarily be brief—as she is yet in her infancy, and has not had time largely to develop her economy, or furnish any great amount of historic material.

The Discipline adopted at her organization in 1860, is precisely the same, with some few alterations and improvements, with that of the Episcopal Methodists. All, therefore, acquainted with the Discipline of the one, must have a tolerably correct idea of that of the other. The history of the two bodies, both internal and external—taking the Old Church as she used to be once—is essentially the same; the Free Church scarcely differing from the Episcopal, except where the Episcopal differs from her former self.

It must not be forgotten, that the work which is now being carried on by means of the Free Methodists, is none other than a revival of the Methodism of primitive times—none other than a revival of pure, primitive, Wesleyan Methodism; and that the history of the doctrine, discipline, and general economy of the Old Church in the days of her uncorrupted simplicity, is substantially the history of the new organization at the present day. Some few changes have indeed been made, which we shall presently notice; but, “as in water, face answereth to face,” so the general features of the Old Church are reflected by those of the New.

As a brief outline of the character and economy of our young Church—the Free Methodist—the following tract, entitled “Free Methodist Church,” may well be introduced at this point:

FREE METHODIST CHURCH.

The Free Methodist Church is a body of Christians who profess to be in earnest to get to Heaven. They do not believe that either God or the Bible has changed to accommodate the fashionable tendencies of the age. They solemnly protest against the union of the Church and the world. The conditions of salvation, as they teach, are the same now that they were eighteen hundred years ago.—He who would be a Christian in reality, as well as in name, must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Jesus. He must come out from the world and be separate, and touch not the unclean thing.

1. In doctrine they are Methodists. They believe in the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, in a general atonement, in the necessity of the new birth, in the witness of the Spirit, and in future rewards and punishments. They insist that it is the duty and the privilege of every believer to be sanctified wholly, and to be preserved, soul and body and spirit, blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Every one who is received into full connection, either professes to enjoy that perfect love which casts out fear, or promises diligently to seek until he obtains it.

2. They look upon practical godliness as the never-failing result of a genuine religious experience. “By their fruits ye shall know them.” Hence they insist that those who profess to be disciples of Christ, should come out from unbelievers and be separate, abstaining from connection with all secret societies, renouncing all vain pomp and glory, adorning themselves in modest apparel, and not in gold or pearls, or costly array. We have no right to abol-

ish any of the requirements made by Christ and the apostles, or to make obedience to them a matter of small consequence. The Golden Rule, they hold, applies equally to the colored as to the white race. The first Free Methodist Church ever organized was in St. Louis, a slave-holding city, and at a time when slave-holders were freely admitted to the churches generally. Yet they made non-slave-holding a test of membership, prohibiting, as they have ever done, "the buying, selling, or holding a human being as a slave."

3. The government is not aristocratic, but the members all have an equal voice with the ministers in all the councils of the Church. Both the Annual and General Conferences are composed of as many lay delegates as ministers, who have an equal voice and vote in all the proceedings. The stationing committee, by whom the appointments are made, is composed of the chairmen of the districts and an equal number of laymen chosen for that purpose. The official boards are selected by the societies, and not appointed by the preachers. Instead of presiding elders, they have chairmen of districts, who generally have a circuit the same as the rest of the preachers. They have general superintendents, elected once in four years, whose duty it is to preside at the Annual Conferences, and travel through the connection at large. The rights of the members are carefully guarded, and in all trials, the society, and not the preacher, selects the committee.

4. They endeavor to promote spirituality and simplicity in worship. Congregational singing is universal, and performances upon musical instruments, and singing by choirs in public worship, are prohibited. They believe in the Holy Ghost. If men are really converted and sanctified, it is through the power of the Spirit of God. When He works, there is a stir. As President Edwards says, "Eternal things are so great, and of such vast concern, that

there is great absurdity in men's being but moderately moved and affected by them." Where the Spirit of God is, there is liberty. The Free Methodists, while they do not believe in any mere formal noise, yet, when the Spirit comes like "a rushing mighty wind," as on the day of Pentecost, they do not dare to oppose the manifestations of His presence. As Edwards says, "Whenever there is any considerable degree of the Spirit's influence upon a mixed multitude, it will produce, some way or other, a great visible commotion." To resist His operations is to hinder the work of God.

5. They do not believe in resorting to worldly policy to sustain the Gospel. Christ has said, that whosoever giveth a cup of cold water in His name, shall in no wise lose his reward. But it is the motive, and not the amount done, that secures the Divine approbation. There is no more virtue in giving to the cause of God for the sake of carnal pleasure, than there is in any other purely selfish action. Hence, they give no countenance to modern expedients for promoting Christianity, such as selling or renting pews, pic-nics, Christmas trees, festivals, lotteries, fairs, and donation parties. To say that the Church cannot be sustained without these contrivances to beguile the world into its support, is to confess that professing Christians are "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God." It is to pronounce Christianity a failure. The Gospel possesses an inherent power that will not only sustain itself, but make its way through all opposition, wherever its advocates live up to its requirements, and rely upon its promises.

6. All their Churches are required to be free as the grace they preach. They believe that their mission is two-fold—to maintain the Bible standard of Christianity—and to preach the Gospel to the poor. Hence they require that all seats in their houses of worship should BE FREE.—No pews can be rented or sold among them. The world

will never become converted to Christ, so long as the Churches are conducted upon the exclusive system. It has always been contrary to the economy of the Christian Church, to build houses of worship with pews to sell or rent. But the spirit of the world has encroached by little and little, until, in many parts of the United States, not a single free church can be found in any of the cities or larger villages. The pew system generally prevails among all denominations. We are thoroughly convinced that this system is wrong in principle, and bad in its tendency. It is a corruption of Christianity. *Free churches are essential to reach the masses.* The provisions of the Gospel are for all. The "glad tidings" must be proclaimed to every individual of the human race. God sends the true light to illuminate and melt every heart. It visits the palace and the dungeon, saluting the king and the captive. To civilized and savage, bound and free, black and white, the ignorant and the learned, is freely offered the great salvation.

But for whose benefit are special efforts to be put forth? Who must be particularly cared for? Jesus settles this question: "The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up," and, as if all this would be insufficient to satisfy John of the validity of his claims, he adds, "and the poor have the gospel preached to them." This was the crowning proof that He was the One that should come. In this respect, the Church must follow in the footsteps of Jesus. She must see to it, that the gospel is preached to the poor. Thus the duty of preaching the gospel to the poor is enjoined by the plainest precepts and examples.— If the gospel is to be preached to all, then it follows, as a necessary consequence, that all the arrangements for preaching the gospel should be so made as to secure this object. If it be said that seats would be freely given to those who

are unable to pay for them ; we answer, this does not meet the case. But few are willing, so long as they are able to appear at Church, to be publicly treated as paupers.

7. The Free Methodist Church was organized in the connectional form in 1860. Prior to this, a church had been organized in St. Louis. The Rev. Dr. Redfield labored there with the M. E. Church, and a powerful revival of the work of God broke out. So great was the opposition of the resident pastor, that a large number of the members and converts felt obliged to leave. They understood that the presiding elder would organize them into a separate charge. He afterwards refused to do it. They felt that they could not go back, or join any other church ; so they were organized into an independent body. Soon after, a church was organized at Albion on a similar plan. A convention was held at Pekin, N. Y., in the fall of 1860, when the present Discipline, in substance, was adopted.

In the fall of 1870, there were, according to the official report of the denomination, 129 preachers, 5,656 members, 58 church edifices, and church property valued at \$234,700.

The Free Methodist Church had its origin in necessity and not in choice. It did not grow out of a secession, nor out of an unsuccessful attempt to bring about a reform in the government of the Church. Those concerned in its formation never expected a separation from the Methodist Episcopal Church, until they were unjustly excluded from its pale. They sought redress at the proper tribunal. It was not granted. Even a candid hearing was denied them. Thus thrown out, and the possibility of a restoration being cut off, and believing that God still called them to labor for the salvation of souls, they had no alternative but to form a new organization. In doctrine, discipline, and spirit, they were Methodists, and hence they could not offer themselves to any other denomination.

The issue on which they were thrust out, was between

dead formalism and the life and power of godliness, and so they could not feel at home with those branches of the Methodist family into whose formation other questions mainly entered.

But though the Methodist Episcopal, and Free Methodist Churches, are characterized by the same general system of doctrine and discipline, as before stated; yet they are wide apart in some things, particularly of a practical nature.

First: they differ in their creed, or "Articles of Religion;" the difference evidently redounding to the advantage of the last-named Church. In the creed of the Free Methodist Church, four "Articles" of the Old Church creed—the 14th, 19th, 21st and 23d—are very properly left out; and two others, not found in the creed of the Old Church—the one on "entire sanctification," and the other on "future rewards and punishments"—are added, making twenty-three in all.

As the M. E. Church borrowed her "Articles of Religion," in the main, from the Church of England, which had so lately broken away from Romanism, it is not strange that she should have guarded against the errors of Popery, in imitation of the mother-creed, by retaining the "Articles" on "Purgatory," "Works of Supererogation," the "Marriage of Ministers," and the like; but who is not surprised that she should have omitted to introduce the doctrine of "entire sanctification," and of "future rewards and punishments," which she has always, at least until lately, deemed fundamental? These doctrines, so clearly taught in the standards of the Old Church, and made to enter into the confession of her ministers—the former especially—upon their admission into full connection, the Free Methodist Church have most appropriately incorporated into her creed—her life and teaching eminently corresponding thereto.

Secondly: There is a material difference between the two denominations, with respect to what are called "The General Rules." In the Discipline of the Old Church, the "General Rule" on slavery is preposterously ambiguous: being variously construed in favor, or against slave-holding, according to the various parallels of latitude covered by the Church—thus adapting itself to all sections of the country. This character was evidently impressed upon the "Rule" as a sort of compromise—allowing the Southern portion of the Church to hold their fellow-creatures in bondage under the sanction of her own legislative enactments, and pacifying the brethren of the North, at the same time, with the idea that they had an anti-slavery Discipline, and would soon be rid of "the great evil of slavery" altogether.

Whether this miserable ambiguity in the "Rule" on slavery was originally designed, or not, it has been designedly perpetuated among us—the General Conference steadily refusing to alter the rule, or give any authoritative explanation of it. Doubtless it has all-along been the policy of the ruling authorities of the M. E. Church, to maintain "the peculiar institution," under the hollow-hearted pretext of deploring its existence; and more fully to secure the object of their hypocritical double-dealing, a distinct chapter must be introduced into the Discipline, providing for and regulating the evil—these pious law-makers professing a desire for its speedy extirpation at the same time, and inquiring, as if they did not know, forsooth, what should be done to bring it about. After all, though God Almighty has undertaken the business—having abolished the hoary abomination throughout the country with the edge of the sword, which her determination to perpetuate the evil compelled Him to employ for that purpose—still, the unchanged "General Rule," and the supplementary chapter on the subject, fritted down to an equivocal ad-

visory admonition, are found upon the pages of her statute-book.

But no recognition of the right of one man to own property in another, has been allowed to disgrace the Discipline of the Free Methodist Church. The chapter on slavery has been left out altogether, as she had no occasion for any law by which to regulate an institution or practice she utterly repudiated; and the "General Rule," unlike that in the Discipline of the Old Church, is made prohibitory of *slave-holding*, as well as of the "*buying and selling* of slaves," and indeed of everything in the shape of human bondage. The "Rule," as adopted by the Free Church, is too full and explicit in language to be evaded in any way; and is, in fine, as it was intended to be, the very synonym of anti-slaveryism in all its moods and tenses.

CHAPTER XIII.

MANY of the "Rules and Regulations" of the Free Methodists are none other than those of the Old Church restored to their original form. With respect to these especially, the Free Church differs from the old denomination only as she differs from her former character; and such difference, it must be confessed, though branded as schismatic and revolutionary by the last-named Church, is essentially pacific and reformatory in its nature—a difference which conscience, and the certainty of more extensive usefulness thereby, demanded for the new organization.

Among the "Regulations" in question, the free-seat system occupies a place of unusual prominence, and shall be first considered.

The Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, down to 1852, peremptorily forbade the selling or renting of seats in any of her houses of worship; the practice, previous to that time, was scarcely known among us. True, it had been gradually creeping into New England and New York for some little time before, though in palpable violation of a positive rule on the subject; and the experiment had been attempted in one of the churches of Cincinnati, Ohio. But the great body of the Church, preachers and people, were opposed to such innovation upon a usage which had existed and been so signally owned of God, especially as it related to the poor, from the beginning; and it would have been nipped in the bud, but for a compromise with slavery—the South, though mortally

opposed to pewed Churches, informally pledging themselves to connive at their existence, "if the North would only just let slavery alone." This compromise with "the sum of all villanies," and source of all mischief, informally negotiated between the Northern and Southern portions of the Church in General Conference assembled, resulted in opening the door at the Conference of 1852 for the virtual abrogation of the free-seat system.

The "Rule," as it originally stood in the Old Church Discipline, read as follows: "Let all our churches be built plain and decent, and with free seats; but not more expensive than is absolutely unavoidable; otherwise the necessity of raising money will make rich men necessary to us. But if so, we must be dependent on them, yea, and governed by them. And then farewell to Methodist discipline, if not doctrine too." But in 1852, as above mentioned, the restriction in regard to free seats was taken off; and the consequence was, the evil foreseen in such an event has come upon us—both the discipline and doctrine of distinctive Methodism have fallen into disuse.

This same free-seat system, however, so essential to the spread of the gospel and the salvation of souls, was not to be spared from the instrumentalities in use for the conversion of the world. For though a Church, with whom soul-saving had become secondary to the aspirations of pride and popularity, could well enough dispense with it in her downward career; still, it was not to be lost to the great cause of evangelization. The Free Methodists have had the wisdom and the piety to restore it to its original form and efficiency, and to throw around it, as a guarantee of its integrity for the future, one of the restrictive rules of her Discipline. Scarcely can the adaptation of this system to promote the cause of religion, particularly among the lower classes, be over-rated. We might say much in its favor, pointing to various incidents and facts illustrative

of its great comparative utility: but we shall content ourselves by introducing the following article on the subject from the *Earnest Christian*:

“FREE CHURCHES.

“BY THE EDITOR.

“Mankind need nothing so much, as the universal prevalence of the Christian religion, in its purity. This would allay the evils under which humanity is groaning, by removing their cause. It would bring Paradise back to earth. For the blessings of the Gospel of Christ, there is no substitute. He who enjoys them, in their fullness, has all he needs to make him happy. In their absence, man is ‘wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.’

“Things, trifling in themselves, become important when they affect the accomplishment of some great, beneficent enterprise. A glass of wine overthrew the Orleans dynasty, resulted in the horrors of civil war, and deluged France with the best blood of her children. A passing cloud suggested to Franklin the theory of electricity, and led to the transmission of messages upon the swift wing of the trained lightning. A small file may render worthless the heaviest piece of artillery, and decide the battle on which the fate of nations is suspended.

“The question of free churches derives its importance from its influence upon the purity and the progress of Christianity. It has a greater bearing upon both, than many imagine. The world will never become converted to Christ, so long as the Churches are conducted upon the exclusive system. It has always been contrary to the economy of the Methodist Church, to build houses of worship with pews to sell or rent. But the spirit of the world has encroached upon us by little, and little, until in many parts of the United States, not a single free church can be

found in any of the cities or larger villages. The pew system generally obtains among all denominations. We are thoroughly convinced that this system is wrong in principle, and bad in its tendency. It is a corruption of Christianity. This we propose to show. We claim the indulgence of expressing ourselves strongly. We cannot adopt the cautious language of doubt, for we have no misgivings. We do not believe merely that there should be free churches, but that *all* churches should be free. Not merely that some unmarketable seats should not be rented or sold but that no seat in the House of God should be rented or sold. Respected readers, we ask your candid attention to the arguments that may be presented in these pages. Weigh them well. You may have given your countenance to the pew system, as many have, simply because you found it in practice. If you have thought upon the question at all, you may have regarded it merely as one of expediency. We hope to show that the pew system is both inexpedient and wrong. We design to prove that our houses of worship should be, like the grace we preach, and the air we breathe, free to all.

“Free Churches are essential to reach the masses.

“The wealth of the world is in the hands of a few. In every country the poor abound. The most prudent are liable to misfortunes. Sickness may consume the earnings of the industrious. Death may take from the helpless wife, and dependent children, the heart that loved and the hand that filled the house with plenty. Man is depraved. Sin has diffused itself everywhere, often causing poverty and suffering.

“God assured his ancient people, favored above all others with precautions against want, that ‘the poor shall never cease out of the land.’ These are the ones upon whom the ills of life fall with crushing weight. Extortion wrings from them their scanty pittance. The law may

endeavor to protect them; but they are without the means to obtain redress at her courts. If famine visits the land, she comes unbidden to their table, and remains their guest until they are consumed.

"The provisions of the Gospel are for all. The 'glad tidings' must be proclaimed to every individual of the human race. God sends the TRUE LIGHT to illuminate and melt every heart. It visits the palace and the dungeon, saluting the king and the captive. To civilized and savage, bond and free, black and white, the ignorant and the learned, is freely offered the great salvation.

"*But for whose benefit are special efforts to be put forth?* Who must be *particularly* cared for? Jesus settles this question. He leaves no room for cavil. When John sent to know who he was, Christ charged the messengers to return and show John the things which they had seen and heard. 'The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up,' and, as if all this would be insufficient to satisfy John of the validity of his claims, he adds, 'AND THE POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM.' This was the crowning proof that He was the ONE THAT SHOULD COME. It does not appear that after this, John ever had any doubts of the Messiahship of Christ. He that thus cared for the poor must be from God.

"In this respect, the Church must follow in the footsteps of Jesus. She must see to it, that the gospel is preached to the poor. With them, peculiar pains must be taken.—The message of the minister must be adapted to their wants and condition. The greatest trophies of saving grace must be sought among them. This was the view taken by the first heralds of the cross. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, 'for ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God hath chosen the foolish

things of the world to confound the wise ; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty ; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are : that no flesh shall glory in his presence.'

"Similar statements in regard to the rich are not to be found in the Bible. On the contrary, the Apostle James asks the brethren, 'Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment-seats? Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by which ye are called?' He also refers to it, as an undeniable fact, that the poor are elected to special privileges under the gospel dispensation. 'Hearken, my beloved brethren : hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love him?'

"Thus the duty of preaching the gospel to the poor is enjoined by the plainest precepts and examples. This is the standing proof of the Divine mission of the Church. In her regard for the poor, Christianity asserts her superiority to all systems of human origin. The pride of man regards most the mere accidents of humanity ; but God passes by these, and looks at that which is alone essential and imperishable. In his sight, position, power, and wealth, are the merest trifles. They do not add to the value or dignity of the possessor. God has magnified man by making him free and immortal. Like a good father, he provides for all his family, but in a special manner for the largest number, and the most destitute. He takes the most pains with those that by others are most neglected.

"Hence, as that great, good man, Dr. Olin, says: 'The gospel is preached to the poor—to the masses. It is made for them ; it suits them. Is it not for the rich, for the cultivated, the intellectual? Not as such. They must become as the poor, as little children, as fools. They must

come down to the common platform. They must be saved just like so many plowmen, or common day-laborers. They must feel themselves sinners, must repent, trust in Christ, like beggars, like publicans. Sometimes we hear men prate about preaching that may do for common people, while it is good for nothing for the refined, and the educated. This is a damning heresy. It is a ruinous delusion. All breathe the same air. All are of one blood. All die. There is precisely one gospel for all; and that is the gospel that the poor have preached to them. The poor are the favored ones. They are not called up. The great are called down. They may dress, and feed, and ride, and live in ways of their own choosing; but as to getting to heaven, there is only God's way—the way of the poor.—They may fare sumptuously every day, but there is only one sort of manna.

“That is the gospel which is effectually preached to the poor, and which converts the people. The result shows it. It has demonstration in its fruits. A great many things held, and preached, may be above the common mind—intricate—requiring logic and grasp of mind to embrace them. They may be true, important, but they are not the gospel, nor its vital, central truths. Take them away, and the gospel will remain. Add them, and you do not help the gospel. That is preached to the poor. Common people can understand it. This is a good test. All the rest is, at least, not essential.

“There are hot controversies about the true Church. What constitutes it, what is essential to it, what vitiates it? These may be important questions, but there are more important ones. It may be that there cannot be a Church without a bishop, or that there can. There can be none without a gospel, and a gospel for the poor. Does a Church preach the gospel to the poor—preach it effectively? Does it convert and sanctify the people? Are its

preaching, its forms, its doctrines, adapted *specially* to these results? If not, we need not take the trouble of asking any more questions about it. It has missed the main matter. It does not do what Jesus did—what the Apostles did. Is there a Church, a ministry, that converts, reforms, sanctifies the people? Do the poor really learn to love Christ? Do they live purely, and die happy? I hope that Church conforms to the New Testament in its government and forms, as far as may be. I trust it has nothing anti-republican, or schismatic, or disorderly, in its fundamental principles and policy. I wish its ministers may be men of the best training, and eloquent. I hope they worship in goodly temples, and all that; but I cannot think or talk gravely about these matters on the Sabbath. They preach a saving gospel to the poor, and that is enough. It is an Apostolic Church. Christ is the corner stone. The main thing is secured—thank God!

“If the gospel is to be preached to the poor, then it follows, as a necessary consequence, that all the arrangements for preaching the gospel should be so made as to secure this object. There must not be a mere incidental provision for having the poor hear the gospel; this is the main thing to be looked after.

“There is a feeling of independence in man that prompts him not to go where he fears he shall be regarded as an intruder. This is especially true of our American people. They will not accept as a gratuity what others claim as a right. Their poverty does not lessen their self-respect.—Let them be treated at a social visit as objects of charity, rather than equals, and they will not be very likely to repeat it. Hence, houses of worship should be, not like the first-class car on a European railway, for the exclusive; but, like the streets we walk, free for all. Their portals should be opened as wide for the common laborer, or the indigent widow, as for the assuming, or wealthy. All who

behave themselves in a becoming manner, should feel at perfect liberty to attend on all occasions of public worship.

“The requirement of the gospel is not met by setting apart a certain number of free seats for those who are too poor, or too indifferent, to rent or purchase. As Bishop Morris says, ‘We know it is the custom in many pewed chapels, to leave certain seats free for the accommodation of such as cannot buy or rent; but it seems to answer almost no purpose, except to give offense. Who is willing, thus publicly, to advertise his poverty or misfortunes—his want of ability or inclination to afford himself a place in the church—by taking the “poor seats”? Such humility is not to be expected in those who need the instruction of the gospel most. Besides, to require it, is not only uncharitable and unwise, but unscriptural.’

“If it be said that seats would be freely given to those who are unable to pay for them, we answer, this does not meet the case. But few are willing, so long as they are able to appear at church, to be publicly treated as paupers. Neither is it true, as is sometimes assumed, that those who are too poor, or too indifferent to religion, to pay for a seat in the House of God, would not be likely to be benefited by its ordinances. Had not such persons been reached, the conquests of the gospel would have been limited indeed. Christianity would have died out long ago. The greatest number of her adherents, and the ablest champions that ever stood up in her defense, were of this class.

“The pew system, wherever it prevails, not only keeps the masses from attending church, but alienates them, in a great degree, from Christianity itself. They look upon it as an institution for the genteel, and the fashionable; and upon Christians as a proud and exclusive class. ‘When I came to this city,’ said a respectable mechanic, ‘I was a member of a Christian church. I rented a seat, and attended worship regularly. But I found that I could not

hire a seat and attend church at an expense of less than fifty dollars a-year, without having my family looked down upon with contempt. This expense I could not afford ; so we do not any longer attend religious meetings.' His experience is that of multitudes. Many who, on going to the cities, are favorably inclined to religion, finding themselves virtually excluded from the churches, become at first indifferent, and then ready to drink in any error that comes along. Hence the ease with which the advocates of Millerism and Spiritualism have found hearers and converts.

"Perhaps no part of our country has greater religious advantages than New England. In some portions, laws formerly existed, requiring, under penalty, attendance upon church. A habit of church-going was formed. The influence of the immigration of foreigners is less there than in any other section of the Union. There the pew-system was first introduced. There it almost universally prevails. What is the result ? Says the report on Home Missions, presented to the Massachusetts General Association, 1858 : 'From reliable statistics, it appears that in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Massachusetts, not more than one-quarter of the population are in the habit of attending church. There are one million three hundred thousand people in New England, who, as far as attending church is concerned, are practically like the heathen.'

"Says the Rev. Edward Stuart, a clergyman in London : 'The pew system, which has introduced so unchristian a distinction in the House of God, between the sittings of the rich and the poor, is, there can be no doubt, doing more to alienate the hearts of tens of thousands in every large town in England from the Church of Christ, than any other thing that could be named.' He tells us that the large churches in London are filled almost exclusively with the rich, and adds, 'In some cases it is all but

impossible for a poor man to find a place in the House of CHRIST—of CHRIST, who himself, lived all his life among the poor.' The editor of the *English Guardian* remarks that the system of pews 'has eaten, and is eating, the very life out of the Church.'

"Take a city nearer home. Says the *Buffalo Christian Advocate*: 'We have in Buffalo about forty Protestant churches. These reach, and influence, more or less, about twenty thousand of our eighty thousand people. This leaves sixty thousand either unprovided for, or to Catholic influence. It may be safe to calculate that forty thousand of our inhabitants attend no place of worship whatever.'

"Friends of Jesus, we call upon you to take this matter into serious consideration. The gospel is committed to your trust. Your business is to save souls—first your own, then the souls of others. You are to dig for rough diamonds amid the ruins of fallen humanity, and polish them up for jewels in the crown of your Redeemer. The church edifice is your workshop. Do not, we beseech you, convert it into a show-room, to display, not the graces of Christians, but the vain fashions of the world.

"Politicians teach us an important lesson. How do they reach the masses? The places for their public gatherings, often rough and uncomfortable, are always free. The rich and poor associate as equals. What party could long survive, should they build splendid temples for the propagation of their principles, and then sell, at a high rate, the right of occupancy of their seats? It is no feeble proof of the Divine origin of Christianity, that it has been able to survive a practice so absurd. But it can never spread with the rapidity with which we are authorized—from its sublime doctrines, affecting man's highest interests for time and for eternity; from the beneficent influence it ever exerts upon society, and from the gracious, efficacious assistance which God has promised to those

who labor, as He directs, for its promotion—to expect it should, until all of its houses of worship are free.”

Another “regulation,” abandoned by the M. E. Church, and restored by the Free Methodists, has respect to instrumental music. We are not aware that the Old Church ever excluded the use of instruments from the worship of God by any particular rule of Discipline; but such had never been her usage, as the almost universal sentiment of her people were adverse to it, and the General Conference had more than once discountenanced the practice by an advisory resolution, which now stands upon her Journal. Such helps, or hindrances rather, in the music of the sanctuary, are absolutely forbidden in the Discipline of the Free Methodist denomination, who esteem it a delight, as a duty, to keep to the old “land-marks” on this important subject. Their reasons, in general, for excluding instrumental music from the house of God, may be seen in the subjoined letter, published and endorsed by the *Earnest Christian*, of January, 1864. The letter will speak for itself, as to the occasion that called it forth, and the circumstances under which it was written.

“DEAR BRETHREN:—As I am about to address you on a subject of deep and lasting interest to the Church of Christ; and one, too, which, under the circumstances, involves considerations of the most delicate nature; I dare not proceed in the undertaking without lifting my heart to Him, ‘whose we are and whom we serve,’ that He would vouchsafe two things—first, that I may write, and secondly, that you may read this epistle, in the spirit of Christ.

“The subject to which I allude is the setting up an organ of music in your new church. And who can say, in almost any view of this subject, that it is not one of deep and lasting interest to the Church of Christ—especially

that branch of it which holds Methodism and Christianity to be one and the same thing? When the intelligence of this thing came to my ears, it gave me a shock I had not often felt. There was no redeeming circumstance from which I could derive any relief. The thing had been done; it had been done by men of piety—by men of influence—by men I had esteemed almost beyond any others of my acquaintance. Indeed, it had been done by men who were the very last I should have suspected of such a thing in all the district! I felt,—I prayed,—I wept.

“But all this opposition to church organs, it will be said, perhaps, is the effect of education, of superstition, of habit: or, at least, of great weakness. But admitting all this; still, as the great body of our people are honestly opposed to instrumental music in churches, and would be greatly injured in their feelings by its introduction there, I submit to your Christian charity whether the consciences of *even weak* brethren are not to be regarded; and whether we are not required by God himself to abstain from anything of this sort, ‘whereby a brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak’? This simple circumstance, when you come to look at it, will be a sufficient reason with you, no doubt, as it surely is with me, for discountenancing instrumental music in churches. But there are other reasons for excluding instrumental music from the worship of God, which appeal with equal force to our Christian charity, if not, indeed, to our sense of moral obligation.

“1. Mr. Wesley, whom I regard as no mean authority in such cases, peremptorily forbade the use of instrumental music in all his societies.

“2. The practice of using instrumental music in the worship of God has been steadily opposed by our Church, preachers and people, with the exception of here and there an individual, down to the present time. At least, this has been the case in our own country.

“3. In 1836, the General Conference passed a resolution, solemnly enjoining it upon the ministry to discourage the use of instrumental music in churches, by all prudent means; declaring the practice to be utterly at variance with vital godliness.

“4. The use of instrumental music in the worship of God, by David, is most clearly condemned by the prophet Amos. See the Book of this prophet, chap. vi., verse 5, with Dr. Clarke’s comment upon the passage; and also his note on 2 Chron. xxix. 25, to the same effect. The Doctor, in his comment on these passages, shows most conclusively, at least to my mind, that the use of instrumental music in the worship of God, was sinful, even in David’s time. But even were we to admit that David was justifiable in using such music, this would no more prove that we may use it under the gospel dispensation, than that we may imitate him in having a plurality of wives, or in offering those sacrifices which were prescribed by the ceremonial law; for if it should be argued that the law of ceremonies and the custom of polygamy were abolished by the express authority of our Lord and his apostles, so was the use of instrumental music in Divine worship forever excluded by their example, as nothing of the kind was ever allowed in their practice.

“I know it is said that instrumental music is an *improvement* on primitive usage. And I know equally well that primitive usage *needs no* improvement; but that all departures from it are of the nature of apostacy, while all improvement consists in returning to first principles, or in coming back to primitive usage from which apostate churches have departed. *Improvement* is the specious name under which all errors and corruptions that ever disgraced the Church, have crept in. And I, for one, have grown quite suspicious of this name. I cannot help thinking that those changes by which we ‘depart from the old

land-marks' which our fathers set up in the days of their simplicity are to be recognized, not as *useful improvements*, but as *hurtful innovations*. Let us take a few examples of these *improvements*, as they present themselves in the history of the Church in by-gone days, and we shall learn to adopt them, it is presumed, with great caution—or rather, to adopt them not at all. It will be remembered that the Jews *improved* the worship of their forefathers, until all 'appeared beautiful *without* ; but *within*, was full of rottenness and dead men's bones.' The Papal Hierarchy have *improved* the apostolic worship until not only images, and relics, and saints, have come to be adored ; but his holiness, the Pope, 'opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped, so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.' And some of the Methodist people, particularly in Europe, have *improved* the Wesleyan worship until we see

" 'The spirit in the letter lost—
The substance in the shade.'

This remark applies, I am well assured by some of our English brethren, to that portion of the British connection especially who have introduced organ worship into their churches—particularly in the city of Leeds, where this very circumstance occasioned the secession of no less than two thousand members at one time. With *such improvements* before our eyes, is it not time to pause and consider ?

" 'But we shall get more hearers by having a good organ in the church.' Aye, and the same might be said of many other expedients—as the introduction of plays, shows, festivals, and the like ; particularly might one increase the number of his hearers by a compliance with that numerous class who 'say to the seers, see not, and to the prophets, prophesy not unto us right things : speak unto us smooth things ; prophesy deceit.' But,

“ ‘ Shall I to soothe the unholy throng,
Soften God's truth, and smooth my tongue ? ’

Shall I conform to the world, that the world, through my influence thus exerted, may be conformed to Christ ? How lately did I show, in your own chapel, that conformity to the world, as a means of conforming the world to Christ, never did and never can produce that effect. At all events, I dare not conform to the world, for God has forbidden it ; and I, certainly, am not called upon to shut myself out of heaven by disobeying Him, however I might benefit others by such disobedience.

“ And now, dear brethren, what is to be done ? You have purchased an organ, I am told, and placed it in the church. But will you not consent, after all, to remove it ? Certainly, *you* are not conscience-bound in this matter, but *I* am. *You* do not deem it *wrong* to worship *without* an organ ; but *I*, with many of our people, deem it *wrong* to worship *with* one. And will you not give it up on the ground of *expediency*, if on no other ground ? Will you not give it up ‘ for *conscience* ’ sake ? Conscience, I say, not thine own, but his who is grieved with the practice.’ I hope, I pray, I trust you will ; and that God will bless you in that sacrifice of feeling and of pecuniary interest which such a measure might occasion.

“ But if you feel yourselves called upon, in view of all the circumstances, to retain the organ in the church, still, the question occurs, what is to be done ? You have kindly invited me to officiate at the dedication of your new church ; but, painful as it is to my feelings—and I can assure you it gives me more pain, such is my respect for you, than anything which has ever transpired in connection with my public ministry ; yet, painful as it is to my feelings, I can only accept the invitation on the condition that the organ shall be removed ; for, with my present views, I cannot, in conscience, dedicate to the worship of God, an instru-

ment, which, I believe, would be unacceptable to Him, and one which, I am satisfied, He never designed should be employed in his service—at least, under the gospel dispensation. I say it is painful, extremely painful, for me to decline your invitation, as you are among the last I would be willing to disoblige. But I have looked the matter over; I have made it the subject of much prayer; I have ‘counted the cost;’ and I take this step from the deliberate conviction that such is the will of the Lord.

“I am aware, my dear brethren, that you can well enough dispense with my services at your approaching dedication, as almost any other one will be able to do better than myself. I am not vain enough to suppose that you will be led to secure my attendance at a very great sacrifice; but as you have had the courtesy to invite me, (out of respect for my office, no doubt,) I exceedingly regret that anything should exist to deny me the pleasure of complying with the invitation. And if you can all consent to remove the obstacle which obliges me to decline the honor you have intended me, it will afford me the most heartfelt satisfaction to bear a part in the dedicatory services of your beautiful church. Will you be good enough to advise me on the subject immediately, that I may be seasonably informed of your final decision?

“Yours, respectfully,

“ELIAS BOWEN.

“Caponova, 1846.

“Suffice it to say, I did dedicate the church in accordance with the invitation, but upon the express condition that the organ should be removed immediately after the dedication, (it being impracticable to do it before,) and that it should be specially excepted in the dedicatory prayer, which was done. Thus *my* part of the stipulation was carried out in good faith; but, through the advice of two or three Methodist preachers, as I was told—shame

on them!—the organ was never removed. Since that time, other singing machines have been plentifully introduced into our churches; and O! what a ridiculous bel-
lowing we now have in almost all our houses of worship throughout the land!
E. B.”

This wooden worship, so common in our modern churches, was never known to be productive of the conversion of souls, or to co-exist even, with a state of spiritual life and power, among any people on earth. The *vocal* organ, with which our beneficent Creator has furnished every individual, in general, of the race; and which the poor as well as the rich can afford to use, inasmuch as it is a natural gift, involving no pecuniary expense to the possessor; is the only instrument of music which can be employed in Divine worship with acceptability to God, or profit to the souls of men.

This organ possesses many incalculable advantages. It is of Divine workmanship; exceeding all man-made instruments, therefore, both in *material* and *structure*, as far as the works of *nature* exceed the works of *art*, which is little less than infinite. And it has this additional advantage also, that it can be used at all times, in all places, and under all possible circumstances—which is not the case with any man-made or artificial instrument whatever. Nor does the young convert, or living Christian of any age in religion, fail to use his own voice in singing the praises of God, in preference to all the humanly-constructed instruments in the universe.

Many have been converted and brought into the fold of Christ—have been charmed, exhilarated, and carried forward in the way to heaven—by means of vocal music; while thousands have contracted a taste for vain amusements, sunk down into a state of cold formality, and lost their religion, through the damning influence of the use

of instruments in the worship of God ! Religion always flourishes or declines, as vocal or instrumental music is used in the church ; instrumental music and spiritual death invariably going together on the one hand, and vocal music and spiritual life and prosperity on the other. Christianity and Methodism both set out with vocal music ; and afterwards, when the spirit of piety began to decline, they substituted instrumental—*ostensibly* by way of “ *improvement*,” but in reality as the well-known effect and fostering cause of conformity to the world.

It is not likely that the friends of the fiddle, (an appropriate name for all church instruments,) will recognize the relation of cause and effect here. They would doubtless have us understand that the simultaneous happening of the use of instrumental music in churches, and the decline of religion, is a mere coincidence, and not to be regarded as evidence of the evil tendency of such music. But the uniformity of the thing proves, most conclusively, that the one must be the cause of the other ; or rather, that they are reciprocal, acting upon each other in the relation of cause and effect. At all events, the Free Methodists, viewing the subject in this light, have deemed it not barely prudential, but a matter of moral obligation, to prohibit the use of instrumental music in their churches by a positive rule of Discipline ; and it is hoped they will faithfully live up to so important a rule, “ allowing of no exempt cases,” and that God will continue to smile upon them, and abundantly bless them herein, enabling them still as now to “ sing with the spirit and with the understanding also.”

Among the various other “ Rules and Regulations ” abolished by the M. E. Church, or so changed as to do away their force, and restored to their original form by the Free Methodists, we shall simply notice the rule, or section, as it is termed, “ On dress.”

Formerly, both the "General Rule" and the section on this subject, in the Old Church Discipline, were prohibitors of all extravagance in dress, or anything superfluous; making plainness of apparel, as it ever should be, a condition of membership. But though the "General Rule" still remains intact, the section has been pared down to a mere hortatory injunction, without penalty or practical effect—thereby neutralizing the "General Rule" itself.—St. Paul says, "we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth;" but the General Conference, it would seem, can do nothing for the truth—nothing to exclude the popular sins of the day from the Church, but to open the door for their introduction and cultivation within her pale, at least by a sort of advisory connivance.

As for instance, when it is proposed to abolish slavery, "the sum of all villanies," in the Church, by the adoption of a separate chapter to this end; why, to be sure, there is a "General Rule," providing for its existence, in the way—a constitutional difficulty, which they cannot surmount or overcome by their own independent action as a General Conference. But when the tables are turned, and a "General Rule," forbidding "the putting on of gold and costly apparel," is to be nullified as a barrier in the way of pride and extravagance, in that case they have full power to modify the chapter or section on dress for this purpose. A "General Rule," therefore, which goes to protect or tolerate the sins of the Church, is something the General Conference has no authority to meddle with; it can only be changed or interfered with by what is called the two-thirds and three-fourths process; but a "General Rule," of precisely the same character with the above, which stands in the way of these sins, is no more in their hands than the "seven green withes" which "Samson broke from his limbs, as a thread of tow when it toucheth the fire."

We could multiply instances like the foregoing under this head; but, those already given must suffice as a specimen of the inconsistencies and perpetrations of wrong for some years past, by the Episcopal Methodists, for the purpose of keeping up their reputation and influence as a Christian Church; and at the same time, of covering their own abominable practice of "adorning themselves with gold, and pearls, and costly array," and plunging into all the fripperies and fooleries and extravagances of the fashionable world. And here we must be allowed to say, that our repeated allusions to the inconsistencies and wickedness of the Old Church, is not from any ill will we have towards her; but to show the occasion there was for the formation of another Methodist Church at the time the Free Methodists arose, and to guard the new denomination against an example so fatal to all who presume to venture upon such a course.

CHAPTER XIV.

THERE is another class of "Rules and Regulations" found in the F. M. Church Discipline, which never were in the Discipline of the Old Church, only as they were embraced, *in substance*, in the "General Rules."

Among these, the conditions and manner of "Receiving members into the Church," are of no secondary importance. The conditions of Church-membership with the Free Methodists do not consist in a birth-right qualification—the being born of believing parents; or in mere externals, of any kind, as baptismal regeneration, so called; nor yet in becoming *seekers* of religion, according to the Old Church, which has greatly multiplied the number, and proportionally diminished the spirituality and power, of her membership, in this way; but in a clear, Christian experience, or a manifest adoption into the family of believers, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. They have learned—as well from the lessons of history, as from the tenor of Holy Writ—the necessity of guarding well the door into the Church. And hence, the candidate can only be "received with the consent of three-fourths of the society," after having answered affirmatively, among others of a similar character, the following questions:

"Have you the witness of THE SPIRIT that you are a child of God?

"Have you that perfect love which casteth out fear?—If not, will you diligently seek until you obtain it?

"Will you forever lay aside all superfluous ornaments, and 'adorn yourself in modest apparel, with shame-faced-

ness and sobriety; not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but, which becometh those professing godliness, with good works'?

"Will you abstain from connection with all secret societies, keeping yourself free to follow the will of the Lord in all things?"

Nor are the preachers held to a less strict or stringent rule. They too must give satisfactory answers, on being "received into full connection," to a series of like questions, particularly the following:

"Have you the present assurance of sins forgiven? Do you believe in Christian perfection? Have you attained to this rich experience in your own heart? If not, are you groaning after it? Do you use snuff, tobacco, or drams?"

Thus the door into the ministry is guarded with equal care and jealousy for the cause of a living Christianity, as that into the Church with respect to private members. And what is still better, if possible, these very solemn obligations and vows are held practically sacred, and are being everywhere enforced by the executive authorities of this holy people. The Discipline among them is not a dead letter, as in the Old Church; yet they do not require much ruling, alive as they are in religion, to keep them to their post, since "they are a law unto themselves," finding it "their meat and their drink to do the will of God."

Another new "Regulation" found in the Discipline of the Free Church, consists in the organization of a monthly meeting, "composed of all the preachers, exhorters, stewards, class-leaders, and Sunday-school superintendents, in the circuit or station," entitled "The Official Board," and occupying an intermediate grade, both in regard to time and business, between the quarterly and class meetings—a place it is admirably adapted to fill.

True, "the preacher in charge," among the Episcopal Methodists, has been wont to call together his official board,

on most stations, and counsel with them in things pertaining to the society, as a kind of executive staff; but these meetings were without any authority of rule or formal institution, and had no definite business—none of an *official* character, especially—nor any particular time of coming together. To say the most of them, they had but the sanction of an irregular and partial usage. Of late, however, one of our bishops, by the foulest usurpation, has stamped this official board, (so called because the men composing it are official members of the church, and not because they have any official character as a board;) one of our bishops, we say, has stamped this board with a JUDICIAL character; even higher than that of the General Conference itself; inasmuch as he has authorized them, in connection with “the preacher in charge,” to “withdraw members from the Church without their knowledge or consent!” Or rather, he has placed our membership in the hands of the *preacher alone*, as *he* can always create a majority in the official board, and, indeed, in the Quarterly Conference also, by the multiplication of class-leaders whose office is in his gift, that will do his bidding.

We might challenge the Pope himself to assume higher authority, or invest his most faithful inquisition with power more arbitrary and despotic, than is here conferred upon the official board, as it is commonly called, with the preacher at its head. A fine state of things this! and what is our membership in the Methodist Episcopal Church good for, when placed at the disposal of an unauthorized, irresponsible, capricious tribunal; and that, too, by an episcopal ukase, from which, in these times of bishop adoration, there is no appeal!

But the official members, without organization or authority as a board, and used only for the purpose of usurpation and oppression, or as a scape-goat to bear away the sins of the preacher who shrinks from the responsibility

of his tyrannical doings, in the Old Church: have become a regularly organized, efficient and responsible department of executive administration with the Free Methodists, and an economical auxiliary to the ministry itself, both in "the temporal and spiritual interests of the Church."

But no "Regulation" or "Rule" in the Discipline of the Free Methodist Church under this head—surely none of a purely negative character—seems better adapted to guard the interests, not of vital godliness alone, but of the whole system of Christianity, than that which prohibits all connection with secret societies. Chapter sixth, of Discipline, 1866, reads as follows:

"What rule shall we make in regard to Secret Societies?"

"Voluntary associations are not necessarily sinful because they are secret. But secrecy is always a ground of suspicion. Evil works instinctively incline to darkness.—Good works grow up in light. God commands us to let our light shine. Even a good cause under the shadow of secrecy invalidates its claim to the confidence of open and honest men. Grace and guile can have no affinity. All secrets necessary to be kept, can be kept without an oath. A *bad* institution *ought not*, and a *good* one *need not*, be secret. Philanthropic associations, claiming our co-operation on Christian grounds, must do so with open face.—They must lift the vail while demanding our salutation, or we cannot salute them by the way. Therefore, all secret societies, both good and bad, are to be eschewed.

"Any society requiring an oath, affirmation, or promise of secrecy, as a condition of membership, is held to be a *Secret Society*; and any member joining, or continuing in such, violates his covenant obligations, and shall in due form be excluded from the Church; and the preacher shall report that he is excluded, not for immorality, but for infraction of our rules and regulations."

The M. E. Church has no specific "Rule" against these

mischievous associations. And though she kept herself in great measure, free from them till within a few years—the “General Rule,” which impliedly forbids them, in “forbidding evil of every kind,” and allowing no “diversions which cannot be taken in the name of the Lord Jesus,” still having some authority with her—she has at length thrown off all restraint and gone into them, the preachers especially, with a perfect rush; conforming herself to their requisitions and movements, and depending upon their co-operation and support, till they have become as necessary to the carrying out of her ambitious and worldly designs as the order of Jesuits to those of the Pope and Church of Rome. But the Free Methodists, having seen the awfully demoralizing effects of Free Masonry, and all kindred institutions; and been taught in the Holy Scriptures the wickedness and danger of associating with “the enemies of the cross of Christ,” especially on terms of intimacy and carousal; have very justly excluded these “friends of the world” from her communion, making the entire freedom from all connection with their oath-bound fraternity a condition of membership.

The subjoined article, by Rev. A. A. Phelps, which lately appeared in the columns of the *Northern Independent*, will present, in brief, her views of secret societies:

“What a mania has seized all classes of men on the subject of secret societies! Nearly every branch of business is sought to be improved by secret signs and associations. Mechanics and tradesmen who refuse to join them are crushed or crippled or cursed for their independency. Thus a cruel monopoly is created, and the rights of conscience disregarded. Where and what is American liberty, if success or starvation awaits an individual, according as he shall join, or refuse to join, a secret society? Such a business monopoly merits the reprehension of every noble and independent spirit. Let us have fair play and

equal rights for all; then none will have occasion to complain.

“Still more objectionable is the fashionable mode of carrying on *benevolent enterprises* under the vail of secrecy. That it ever should have been thought necessary to divide the great temperance army into separate squads, to fight the enemy in secret chambers, is one of the wonders of our age. Organization, system, and unity of effort, are very necessary to besiege the citadel of Rum. But who does not know that these objects can be fully secured without resort to secrecy? Many are conscientiously opposed to any organization requiring oaths and pass-words. Hence this very arrangement divides the forces and prevents that unity of effort so essential to the largest success. While we cheerfully acknowledge the good accomplished by the various temperance societies of the day, it is to be feared that some of them have allowed their meetings to so far degenerate into visiting parties and pastimes, as to strike but feeble blows in behalf of rum-ruined humanity.

“The liquor traffic is a public invader of human rights. Why should we sneak away in concealment to concoct our plans of opposition? Let the war be open and undisguised. Instead of this ambush warfare, how much better would it be to rally the friends of temperance, effect regular organizations, hold frequent meetings, secure stirring lectures, provide for essays, poems, and free discussions on every practical point, invite everybody to attend, and push the battle to the gates! An enthusiasm would thus be awakened, which would enlist the energies of the lovers of temperance and truth, and make them feel a personal responsibility in helping roll back the dark waves of death to their native hell!

“My objections to secret temperance organizations are chiefly these: 1. The element of secrecy divides the friends of temperance, shuts out the enemies of temperance, and

thus leads to a partial failure to secure the great object sought. 2. Such societies form an easy stepping-stone to certain mystic orders that are still more objectionable in their character. I refer to the orders of Odd Fellows and Free Masons.

“ And since the latter, from its greater popularity, may be regarded as the representative society, the following remarks will apply to this alone. I feel very confident that all oath-bound, secret societies are at war with the genius of the gospel, and the institutions of a republican government; but a fraternity requiring its members to assume such horrid obligations as Free-masonry imposes, is absolutely reprehensible! No man has a right to take a leap in the dark, by committing himself to a course of action in utter ignorance of its moral character. Much less has he a right to swear away his own life. And yet every candidate for Masonic membership does solemnly promise to obey every injunction of the order, at the forfeiture of his natural life. Any divulging of secrets or dereliction from duty may be punished with death—inflicted, too, in the most barbarous manner. This having your ‘throat cut from ear to ear, your tongue torn out by the roots, and your body buried in the rough sands of the sea at low-water mark’—how appalling! Or, if this is not sufficiently shocking, think of having ‘your left breast torn open, your heart and vitals taken from thence and thrown over your left shoulder, and you carried into the valley of Jehoshaphat to become a prey to wild beasts!’ Do you say that such penalties were never inflicted? Be not too hasty in your conclusions. There is the best evidence that a goodly number have been hurried out of the world by the execution of Masonic law. Perhaps not always, nor generally, in the mode prescribed in the sacrilegious oaths of the order; nevertheless, the spirit of the law has been carried out, by putting its violators where

they can tell no tales. Morgan, Murdoc, Smith, and others, will not soon be forgotten.

“But suppose human life were not jeopardized by Masonic connections; the institution still has many gravely objectionable features. Viewed from the most favorable stand-point, it is nothing better than a mutual aid society, constructed on a selfish basis, and calculated to assist the few at the expense of the many. Its boasted benevolence, heralded on every breeze, is but an empty profession, made for popular effect. Is it an act of *benevolence* for a society to appropriate fifty dollars to defray the funeral expenses of a deceased member who had contributed a hundred dollars to promote its interests?

“The *practical fruits* of Masonry are such as ought to avert the sympathies of every lover of truth. It has come to pass in many sections of the country, that Masonic law overrides the civil law as to defeat the ends of government, and leave nothing of justice but an empty name. Thus the rights of widows are shamefully violated, and the uninitiated are left to pick up the fragments that remain after the fraternity have been fully served. The less you have to do with civil law, the better, provided your legal opponent, together with the judge and a portion of the jury, are Free Masons. This is the power that throws its protection over many a black-hearted villain, and strangely opens a way for his escape. Here, too, is a key to the lengthened life and unlooked-for lenity extended to Jefferson Davis, who, though a high criminal, is also a high Mason.

“How, then can the followers of Jesus consent to form alliance with an institution so worldly, selfish, sacrilegious, and Christless? ‘What fellowship hath light with darkness?’ And with what grace can the Christian go from the mummeries of the lodge-room to the devotions of the prayer-room or the services of the pulpit? But I am told

that it is better to stick to the gospel and let Masonry alone: for if it comes to be understood that I am opposed to Free-Masonry, I can thenceforth do its devotees no good. This caution reveals still more fully the diabolical nature of the mystic order, and nerves me with fresh determination to denounce an institution so gigantic in its proportions, and so essentially opposed to the pure principles of Christianity."

What is truth says one -
 Truth crushed to the ground
 Will rise again says another
 Now I have following a cunningly
 devised fable -
 Converted in the year 1858 I united
 with the M & E Church - Looking up
 this I saw Religion as the most important
 thing I had taken in life regarding it as
 essential to my well being in time and
 happiness in eternity I became
 ministered as heralds of the cross
 bearing the everlasting Gospel - I
 could of a truth say I heard them
 gladly - I delighted to sing -
 I saw Thy Church oh Lord
 Has walls before the Strong
 dear as the apple tree

CHAPTER XV.

WE now come to treat briefly of the government of the Free Methodist Church as a *system*; the occasional notices heretofore taken of certain "Rules and Regulations" contained in their Discipline being isolated and partial, are necessarily incomplete.

Government, in itself considered, whether ecclesiastical or civil, is of Divine institution; and no society, properly considered, can exist without it. Both Church and State, as such, owe their very existence to government. But while God has instituted government, as well in its principles and general economy as in its obligations and duties, for the benefit of man, He has left the particular form, if we except the ancient Theocracy He imposed upon the Jewish nation, to the people themselves—only so that it fall within the great outline of His own universal moral government over the world.

The form of government which has been adopted by the Free Methodist Church, embraces four several departments—legislative, executive, judicial, and prudential;—the latter having respect, more particularly, to the ways and means of giving efficiency and success to the foregoing. The *judicial* element, however, belongs more or less to all these departments, as the government, in its practical operations, sufficiently demonstrates.

"The General Conference, composed of an equal number of clerical and lay delegates," and meeting quadrennially in the manner prescribed by Discipline, constitutes the law-making power, and the highest court of appeal.

“The Annual Conference, composed of all the traveling preachers in full connection, and an equal number of lay delegates,” meets annually, as its name implies, at such time and place as its president and members are pleased to designate, for the purpose of appointing the preachers to their respective fields of labor; examining into their character for piety, improvement, and usefulness; and looking after the spiritual and temporal interests of the Church generally within their bounds.

“The Quarterly Conference, composed of all the official members of the circuit or station” for which it is held; “meets four times a year, in connection with the General Quarterly Meetings, to hear complaints, try appeals, grant and renew licenses to preach, and recommend suitable persons to the Annual Conference to be employed as traveling preachers.”

“The Class-meetings, embracing all or a part of the society, as the case may be, “according to their respective places of abode;” meets weekly, usually on the Sabbath, for mutual edification and improvement, in experimental religion especially; and to aid the preachers in their pastoral oversight and labor. Of “The Official Meeting,” so called, appointed and provided for in the eighteenth section of the Discipline, we have spoken under another head, and need not introduce it here; though, perhaps it should be counted a fifth department, or rather the *fourth* in order—the class-meeting counting the fifth, in the government of the Church.

In connection with these several departments of the government of the Free Methodist Church, and in good accordance with the objects and duties of their institution, several offices are created and filled by the proper authority. Among these, the office of general superintendent claims our special attention.

It is a well known fact, that the bishops of the M. E.

Church were originally called general superintendents, merely, though they very soon took on the title they now bear. Perhaps it would have been as well had their original title remained as it was. This, however, was a matter of comparatively little importance. But it was a very grave mistake that they should be inducted into their office by the solemn form of ordination, or be elected to it for life. The Free Methodists both reject the form of Episcopal ordination, and elect their superintendents, (still retaining the primitive title, as indeed they should,) quadrennially: making them "amenable to the General Conference for the discharge of their official duties, and for their Christian conduct, to the Annual Conferences to which they respectively belong."

But there is the example of the Episcopal Methodists for a sort of diocesan or prelatical Episcopacy—at least for an order of ecclesiastics involving Episcopal ordination, and a life-tenure of office; and lest our young Church should be induced to copy after it in her own form of government, ("for there is no man," or church, "that liveth and sinneth not—is not liable to sin,") it may be well to admonish her of the evil of such a course by the introduction of the following extract, taken from a treatise on Methodist Episcopacy, by the author of this work:

"We do not account the form of ordination with respect to the bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church of any great importance, in itself considered; and yet there are some reasons arising from the laws of association, and the long-established customs of society, why it should be abolished.

"In the first place, we look upon the question in the ordination service, 'Are you persuaded that you are called to this ministration, according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ?' and the answer, 'I am so persuaded,' as a solemn farce. The idea of a special Divine call, as the

language here evidently implies, to a mere office in the Church, goes to identify it, or at least to make it of equal obligation and importance, with a call to the ministry itself, which seems to us preposterous. According to this doctrine, if any one deem that he is called to the episcopacy by the Spirit, or 'will of our Lord Jesus Christ,' he can but say, 'woe is me if I become not a bishop;' and what if half the preachers in the connection should profess to have such a call, by what criterion should we discriminate between them? for they could not all be admitted to the office. Doubtless we are all called to the episcopacy, just as we are called to any other office in the Church, whenever we are appointed to fill it by the suffrages of our brethren.

"Secondly, it appears to us that the question and the answer above referred to, are equally applicable to any other officer of the General Conference; and that the book agents, editors, secretaries, and the like, may just as well be inducted into their respective offices by corresponding forms of ordination, as a bishop. The *ordaining* of a bishop can add nothing to his spiritual character—nothing to his influence or authority as a Christian minister—for he is admitted to the full powers of the ministry, and invested with the highest authority known to the Scriptures for the administration of the word and ordinances, by his ordination as an *elder* or *presbyter*; and set him apart by the form of ordination for the mere *official* duties of the episcopacy, would seem a desecration of this sacred rite.

"But the chief reason why the form of episcopal ordination should be abolished, is, that it inculcates a distinction of *order* in the ministry which does not exist; our bishops being *officers merely*, and *not* a distinct *order*, as the form of ordination would seem to imply. And being false and delusive in *appearance*, it is misleading and pernicious in

its *effects*. The historical and familiar associations of this rite, forever pointing us to an order of ministers, which neither the Scriptures nor the Discipline of our Church recognize, the effect is to invest the bishops with a sanctity of character, and give them an elevation and popularity in respect to other ministers of the same order with themselves, which their office does not confer upon them. Perhaps we might come in time to associate the rite of ordination with a mere office in the Church; but if there is any reliance to be placed upon the evidence of history, or the results of our own personal acquaintance with human nature, the tendencies will be found to operate in another direction; and the distinction which is accorded them from motives of *courtesy* or *respect* by the use of the form of ordination, will both be *claimed* and *conceded* in process of time, *as a matter of right*; and then the consequences, so natural to an undue accumulation of power in the hands of a ruler, must be expected to follow! ‘The prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself.’ And if we would do this, as a Church, if we would prevent the consummation of a scheme of episcopal ambition and tyranny which all history admonishes us will be sure to result from causes now in active operation among us—a scheme which is fast developing itself in the assumption of powers and prerogatives unwarranted by the constitution of the Church—it is important that we abolish the form of the episcopal ordination, in which all the elements of high-Church episcopacy, nay, of *Popery* even, are perceived to lurk!

“Another leading point to be considered in respect to the modification of the episcopacy, consists in a quadrennial rotation. This point, as it is far more practical in its nature and application, so it is of far greater importance to the integrity and liberties of the Church than the foregoing. The form of ordination of bishops, and their perpetuity in office, both tending to the same pernicious end;

the *latter* is altogether more to be deprecated and *feared* than the *former*. The *one*, investing the bishops with practical authority, the true import of the rite being understood, and placing them in a condition to be arbitrary or despotic in their administration; the *other*, involving both a temptation and virtual license to exercise all the power, implied in the form of ordination, without limitation or restraint.

“We have no desire to ‘do away episcopacy, or destroy the plan of our itinerant general superintendency.’ We have always esteemed the episcopal form of Church government the most Scriptural and appropriate; and have felt that the mighty machinery of the itinerant system, belonging to our Church, could only be kept in operation and properly directed by a motive power of equal extent and efficiency with that now lodged in the hands of the bishops. But we cannot identify the *perpetuity* or the *efficiency* of the *office* with the *perpetual incumbency* of the *officer*. Much less can we make the *existence* of the office depend on such incumbency. We believe that the office might only *exist* upon the principle of rotation, but that it would possess *still greater efficiency* for all the legitimate purposes of its institution on that principle.

“Another reason still, and one which certainly ought to have weight with our own people, for the adoption of the proposed rotation scheme, is, that it is required by the *analogies* of *Methodism*. The perpetual incumbency of office by the bishops, constitutes a strange anomaly in the history and government of the Church: there being nothing analogous to it in any part of our system. In the British connection, of which we are the offspring or descendants, the chief office among them—an episcopacy in *fact*, though not in *form*—is not only filled by rotation, but by *annual* rotation even; and had not Mr. Wesley been accustomed to associate perpetuity in office with the

episcopacy at home, it is highly probable that in establishing the episcopal form of government here—a form he greatly preferred to any other, and felt himself at liberty to prescribe for the Methodist societies in this country, they having no connection with any national Church—he would have provided for a succession of bishops in the order, and upon the principle of a *temporary* and settled rotation. But be that as it may, we still maintain that the incumbency of an office, and especially the office of a bishop, limited only by the natural life of the incumbent, not only falls out with all the analogies of the Methodist system; but creates an invidious and repulsive distinction, placing it in the hands of a half-a-dozen officials, intended to be the servants of the Church, to ‘lord it over God’s heritage,’ and with impunity to oppress the great body of the ministry, from whom they derive both their office and their authority!

“But of all the reasons for placing the episcopacy upon the basis of a quadrennial rotation, the greatest and most vital to the liberties of the Church, is, that it furnishes the only adequate check upon episcopal ambition and misrule. Irresponsible power in the hands of fallen man, except where it is restrained and modified by parental affection, always degenerates into despotism; and the creation of an officer for life, at all events if he be of the rank and authority of a bishop of our Church, is virtually to render him independent of the people he is appointed to serve, and to invest him with the attributes of a tyrant.

“If Paul, and Wesley, and Asbury, though life-time superintendents, were upright and lenient in their administration, and government of the Church, consulting the rights and interests of the people in all their transactions and doings, that furnishes no exception to the doctrine here advanced: their *people* were their *children*; and consequently the government was that of *fathers* rather than of

ecclesiastical rulers. The case with respect to our bishops is very different. They sustain no such relation to the people over whom they preside, and cannot be expected to possess those affections and sympathies which necessarily grow out of it. If St. Paul could say to the Church in his time,—‘Though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers,’ how much more we of this day. Indeed there are *none*, since ‘the fathers’ to whom we have referred ‘are fallen asleep,’ who can add in the farther language of the apostle,—‘For in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.’ Even our bishops are but ‘*instructors* in Christ,’ and not fathers in the same sense with Asbury and Wesley and Paul, who had ‘travailed in birth’ for the people they so tenderly watched over and provided for as their spiritual children.”

In place of presiding elders, a class of officers, or sub-bishops, in the M. E. Church, the Free Methodist denomination have what are called chairmen of districts; very much in the manner of the British Conference, or the Methodists of England: which arrangement, in view of the present dense population of the country, the consequent necessity for small districts in these times; is undoubtedly preferable to the old Methodist plan. The chief difference between a presiding elder in the old Church, and the chairman of a district among the Free Methodists, is, that the former gives his whole time to the district, by which also he is supported; while the latter is appointed to a circuit or station, the same as any other preacher, and has his support there; the other charges in the district over which he presides barely defraying his traveling expenses as he goes out to attend their Quarterly Meetings, and look after their interests on some other occasions.

The time has been when presiding elders were of use in the Old Church as an adjunct of the appointing power; but surely there is no occasion for them now, or bishops

either, for that matter ; since they do little else, as things now go, than give their formal assent to stipulations previously entered into between preachers and people, except to serve themselves by an unblushing and sordid favoritism which they everywhere display in the distribution of the preachers and the supply of the charges under their care. But the manner in which the preachers of the Free Church are appointed to their respective fields of labor, leaves little room for this kind of abuse, as the following judicious provision in their disciplinary arrangements will sufficiently show :

“The President of the Annual Conference, with the chairmen of the several districts, with an equal number of laymen, to be elected by ballot the first day of the session, shall constitute a stationing committee, (of which the President of the Conference shall be chairman, having a casting vote,) whose duty it shall be to appoint the preachers to their several fields of labor; provided, that no preacher shall be appointed to the same circuit or station more than two years in succession.”

We can only remark farther upon the government of the Free Methodist Church, that the lay element is made to enter largely into its councils—an equal number of lay and clerical members having seats in both the General and Annual Conferences, with the same rights and responsibilities upon the floor of these bodies. And such is the importance they attach to lay delegation, that, placing it in the same rank with an itinerant ministry and the free-seat system, they have guarded its prospective integrity and continuance by one of their restrictive rules. Our own opinion as to any Scriptural warrant there may be for lay delegation, or the expediency of its introduction as an element of Church government, will be withheld. Certainly, so far as *Methodism* is concerned, it is yet an experiment.

CHAPTER XVI.

FEW Churches have a more Scriptural and complete Church organization than the Free Methodists. None of the same age. True, this young denomination was not left to originate or form her religious system unaided by anything that went before. The grand frame-work, with nearly all its internal calculations and arrangements, had been already furnished to her hand, the developments of Methodism for almost an entire century leaving her little else to do but barely to adopt the system with such alterations and improvements as we have already noticed.—Much is due, however, to the enlightened and pious zeal which the Free Methodist Church has manifested in rescuing Methodism from the perverted uses to which it had come to be applied by the Episcopal Methodists, purging it from the corruptions—legislative and executive—by which they had rendered it odious to the community, and employing it, in accordance with its original design, for the “spreading of Scriptural holiness over the land.” Her institutions and usages, the same as her Discipline in general, and with the same careful revision, are mostly borrowed from the Old Church. Nothing indeed has been taken for granted; nothing upon the ground of Church authority; everything has been “weighed in the balance of the sanctuary,” and made to conform to the word and will of God.

Among the institutions of the Free Church, the Sabbath school, the missionary enterprise, and the support of the ministry—all of which are well provided for in the Dis-

cipline—constitute the more prominent. If these institutions do not take on the form of distinct organizations with this people, as with some others, so much the better; the one organization of the Church, as such, covers the whole ground—the instruction of the children and the missionary work belonging to the pastorate, and the financial affairs of the Church to the membership generally.—By this plan, the complicated and cumbrous machinery of various specific associations is dispensed with, much expense consequently saved to the Church, and the pastor, having all these appliances more immediately under his own eye, is enabled to use them as an appropriate and efficient auxiliary in the achievement of the great end of his calling.

This Church, like all others, has her non-scripta laws, commonly called customs, or usages, and yet possessing all the force of unquestioned authority. Her usages, in general—especially as they relate to hospitality, social intercourse, style of dress, family prayer, asking a blessing at the table, camp-meetings, and the like—are precisely the same with those of the early Methodists, whom she is not ashamed to recognize as a most consistent and worthy model in all things of this sort. And like her acknowledged prototype, she stands aloof from all worldly amusements—"the taking such diversions as cannot be used in the name of the Lord Jesus;" and, above all, from "gift concerts," "prize fairs," "chance games," and all those pernicious contrivances so much resorted to among the churches of modern times for "raising money to do the Lord's work." In her view, all these methods of obtaining money proceed from the popish maxim that "the end justifies the means," or the "doing evil that good may come;" and she looks upon all monies raised and appropriated in this way, as an equal profanation of the treasury of the Lord with "the price of a dog or the hire of a whore."

By the grace of God this people "dare to be singular," and are so, in their manners, in their conversation, and in all the affairs of business life—"not using many words in buying or selling;" but they dare "not be conformed to this world," the very "friendship" of which is "enmity with God," and is forbidden on pain of the Divine displeasure. Indeed, they love singularity, persecuted though they are on account of it—not so much for its own sake, as for the sake of Christ who himself was singular, and for the singular blessedness growing out of it both in this world and that which is to come. They covet a singular death, and a singular inheritance beyond the grave; and they are more than willing to lead a singular life, in order to gain that high distinction. Many are ready to exclaim, "Let me die the death of these earnest Christians, and let my last end be like theirs," who are not willing to live their life.

But if they are determined to avoid the singularity of the self-denying Christian here, and to appear so much like the world's people that nobody will know they are Christians while they live, the fear is that nobody will know it when they come to die—that they themselves will not know it; and, what is still more awful, that Christ their final Judge, will not know it, but will say to them in the great and last day, "Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity, I know you not whence ye are, and shall appoint them their portion with hypocrites and unbelievers!"

The persecution the Free Methodists are called to endure, is no disparagement to them. The Saviour was persecuted; the early Christians, also, with all their real successors "in the kingdom and patience of Jesus;" and particularly the early Methodists, "against whom all manner of evil was spoken," as against the Free Methodists at the present time. They, as well as we, (for I myself am a

Free Methodist,) were calumniated, sneered at, shut out of the churches belonging to other denominations, and prevented, as far as possible, from procuring sites and building churches of their own; were denounced under the opprobrious appellation of enthusiasts, fanatics, and many other titles of reproach, as we now are. But all this was to be expected; for our Divine Lord had long before said, "If any man will live godly in Christ Jesus, he shall suffer persecution;" and then we of the Free Church stamp, whether of the old or new Church order, are as far behind the "*improvements* of this progressive age," in regard to religion, and as utterly ignorant of that "*enlightened piety*" which enables most of the churches now-a-days—the M. E. Church in particular—to get along without persecution, as were our Lord Jesus Christ and the holy apostles. Of course, we must expect to be persecuted "if we live godly lives," and chiefly, as has been the case in all ages, by churches "having a name to live while they are dead."

The Ritual of the Free Methodist Church is the Ritual of the Methodist Episcopal Church, slightly reformed, and brought into greater harmony with the holy Scriptures and experimental religion. Particularly has the Free Church revived, or rather restored to the Discipline, that most excellent and much-needed rule by which "the vile practice of talking in the congregation, before and after service," is emphatically forbidden. We might easily enlarge upon the various features, and great utility of the ritualistic ceremonies here brought to view—particularly as compared to those of most other churches; but the forms of worship, of ordination, of administering the sacraments, of solemnizing matrimony, of the burial of the dead, etc., in the Old Church from which the Ritual of the Free Church has been substantially taken, are so well and generally known to the public, that it were superfluous to

take the time; and especially so, as these forms are being constantly used by the Free Church in all her congregations throughout the land, where every body who chooses can take knowledge of them for themselves.

have lived in the World 42 Years
 years have passed since I united
 with the M.E.C. 6 years since I wrote
 protest in the Protestant Advocate
 against those who were playing the
 game of our churches & years
 since I withdrew from the church
 of converting it into secret
 society lodge. Have experienced some
 the various phases of life thought
 and seen and felt some of the joys and
 sorrows of secret oath bound societies have
 been a constant reader of newspapers
 and many books in which the total
 depravity of our fallen human nature is seen
 and confessed that nothing I ever read or saw
 has impressed me so much with the
 absolute of every attribute of manhood
 seen nothing of the Divinity supposed
 to be somewhere in our nature as
 a notion of the majesty of the Godhead
 and the glory of the Father of the Holy
 Spirit as seen in this little creation.
 When I remember how the Bible
 now at H. Stone's school thrilled the

honor Ministers in whose
do implicitly Confided not only quietly
acquiesced but loudly avowed such
an outrage on justice on our a
and our Holy Religion I am
to say I have been following a
April 26 1874

CHAPTER XVII.

WE are aware it is said of the Free Methodists, that "they are a set of enthusiasts, vainly imagining that they can 'turn the world upside down' by their rant and declamation, while they are miserably destitute of anything like education or intelligence." But such imputation—thrown upon them in utter ignorance of their true character, in some cases, and from enmity and hatred against them on account of their uncompromising opposition to sin, in others—is absolutely false, and, of course, does them great injustice. They are clearly a persecuted people—suffering reproach and obloquy in the cause of their Divine Master, as many have done before them; and we feel bound to vindicate them from aspersions so detrimental to their reputation and influence, and so directly calculated to hinder the salvation of souls which might otherwise be effected through their instrumentality.

It is true, "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called" to be Free Methodists; and yet they have their "honorable counsellors," their men of wealth and standing in the community, to some extent—perhaps as many as would be consistent with their continuance in a state of humiliation and spiritual prosperity, after all. A greater proportion of men of pecuniary means, and of high political and social position, might become a snare to them—inciting them to practices of worldliness and pride, and robbing them of their spiritual life and power. The offer of salvation, however, is to all, and no class or condition of the

human family should be overlooked ; yet the mission of the Free Methodists, like that of the Episcopal Methodists in the days of their simplicity, is chiefly to the poor, and woe be unto them when they shall come to “say to the man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, Sit thou here in a good place, and to the man in vile raiment, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool.” Woe be unto them when they shall so far lose the spirit of their Master—the meek and lowly Jesus—as to be ashamed of “the poor for whom Christ died,” and discriminate in favor of the rich for the sake of popularity or worldly gain.

But poor though the Free Methodists may be, generally speaking, they are by no means destitute of intelligence ; and no people under heaven more cordially repudiate the idea, so often attributed to them, that “ignorance is the mother of devotion.” They are a sensible, well informed people ; and from the industry and enterprise which most of them naturally possess, and which the principles of the religion they enjoy always inspire in experimental Christians, whatever may be their natural disposition or habits, they are rapidly advancing, as well in the various branches of scientific and useful knowledge as in the ordinary comforts of life.

If they were not born in a college, like the Old Church, who have descended from the Wesleys, their founders were college-bred, and would compare not unfavorably with those of the Episcopalians who affect to despise them for their ignorance and want of learning.

Their high appreciation of education—which they look upon as “the hand-maid of religion”—and of the press, as a powerful auxiliary of the pulpit, as well as a most efficient organ for the diffusion of knowledge in general, may be gathered from the action officially had in their General and Annual Conferences upon these subjects.

As early as 1865, when our young Church, as yet, was

scarcely able to provide for the spiritual oversight of the field upon which she had entered, she found time to look after her educational interests, and arrange for the establishment of seminaries of learning.

We learn from the Minutes of the Genesee Conference for that year, that a committee was appointed on education, consisting of Asa Abel, J. W. Reddy, F. J. Ewell, B. T. Roberts, Abram Lott, Mark Johnson, and N. A. Bennett.

In accordance with this action, a board of trustees has been organized, a farm purchased in the town of Chili, Monroe county, N. Y., and ten thousand dollars raised on subscription for the erection of suitable buildings, and preparations actively gone into for putting them up without delay.

The want of a weekly paper has been very much felt by the Free Methodist Church, and several of the Annual Conferences have resolved on starting one. The General Conference, too, has moved in the same direction, having appointed the Rev. Levi Wood editor, and authorized the commencement of the publication of such a paper as soon as five thousand dollars should be raised for the purpose. The paper has made its appearance. It is published at Rochester, N. Y., and is entitled *The Free Methodist*.

The Earnest Christian—a monthly magazine, so favorably noticed and so fully endorsed by the Conferences—was started in 1860 by the Rev. B. T. Roberts, editor and proprietor, on his own responsibility: the providence and grace of God, and the uncertain patronage of the public being his only reliance. This excellent periodical, for integrity of purpose, and a spirit of bold, independent, fearless, Christian enterprise, has no equal in the department of Church literature to which it belongs. Nor is it at all surpassed in its intellectual and scientific character. It has a large subscription list for its age—circulating more

or less in almost every State of the Union, and, to some extent, in foreign countries. More recently, its editorial corps has been somewhat strengthened, and the principal editor left a little more at liberty to look after the various other interests which claim his attention, in every part of the widely extended field over which he is called to preside.

The statistics of this young and rising denomination—the Free Methodist Church—though exceedingly flattering, all things considered, are by no means what they would in all probability have been, but for two reasons, which it is deemed important to mention.

In the first place, the Old Church, now a power in the land, especially for evil, has met her from the first with the most determined opposition—throwing every conceivable obstacle in her way, and crippling her influence with the community by all possible means. O, fearful responsibility! What an awful account must this poor, fallen people render at the last day, for thus “offending Christ’s little ones” of the Free Church persuasion, and thereby occasioning the loss of precious and immortal souls, who might otherwise have been “brought into the kingdom,” and made “heirs of everlasting life.”

And again, secondly, it is obvious she has not sufficiently availed herself of the *aggressive* power of the gospel, but has been too well contented to get happy herself, and look after her own internal affairs. Had she been ready to wield the *offensive*, as well as the *defensive* weapons of the Christian armory, and “carried the war into Africa,” she might doubtless have made more conquests among the unconverted than she can now boast of. True, she has had all the weaknesses and embarrassments incident to new beginnings to grapple with. And then, from the formidable opposition made against her by the baptised enemies of the life of religion, she has been compelled to act

a good deal on the defensive—nay, to struggle for very existence; but, after all, God would undoubtedly have sustained her amid all these difficulties, and caused her to flourish still more abundantly, had she cast her care upon Him and gone into the field in a more aggressive manner. At all events, as she has become stronger in numbers and wealth, and the hold she has upon public confidence, than formerly—as also in her experience with respect to the tactics of Christian warfare—it is hoped that she will hereafter turn her ministrations and movements more proportionately in this direction.

The following table of statistics, showing both her numerical and financial condition in 1870, is taken from the Minutes of the several Annual Conferences for that year:

SUMMARY OF STATISTICS.

	No. of Preachers.	No. of Members.	Value of Church Property.
Michigan Conference,	24	1063	\$12,600
Illinois Conference,	29	1634	54,100
Kansas Conference,	6	200
Susquehanna Conference,	37	1677	53,500
Genesee Conference,	32	1982	114,500
	<hr/> 129	<hr/> 6556	<hr/> \$234,700

Having now gone over the ground of the history of the Free Methodist Church, in the best manner our time and ability, and the sources of information to which we have had access, would admit of, we are brought, by an array of evidence we can neither gainsay nor resist, to the following conclusions: First, That there was ample occasion for the formation of another Methodist Church at the time this new organization arose. Secondly, That the Free Methodists are a veritable Church of Christ—entitled to recognition and fellowship as such, on the part of other Christian churches, and to all the intercommunications and courtesies due from one denomination to another.

And Thirdly, That they are, to all intents and purposes, in the apostolical succession.

We shall spend no time in arguing the necessity of the formation of the Free Methodist Church, feeling assured that all who look over our history with an impartial or unprejudiced eye, will come to the same conclusion. Nor shall we stop to notice any one who may allow himself to question the validity of her claim to be regarded as a real Christian Church, after having compared her character and history with the definition which both she, and the M. E. Church before her, have given of such Church in their respective church formulas. They both say, in their Article of Religion on the subject, "The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments duly administered according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same;" and in the "General Rules," to which they both alike subscribe, with respect to this matter especially, "Such a society [Church,] is no other than *a company of men having the form of godliness, united in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they may help each other to work out their salvation.*" No language could more exactly characterize and describe the Free Methodist people; for such are peculiarly their organization, their objects, and their habits of life. And if they are not a genuine Christian Church, where, we would ask, shall we look for one?—Where?

We say we shall not trouble ourselves to reason with those who are so unreasonable as to dispute the necessity of the formation of the Free Methodist Church, under the circumstances, or the validity of her claim to be regarded and treated as a veritable Church of Christ; but though the very fact of her being a Christian Church would of

itself place her in the apostolical succession, yet there are certain aspects of the case, which will more fully develop themselves as we proceed, in which the last particular deserves to be considered a little more at length.

The dogma of apostolical succession, as maintained by the Church of Rome, though not held by Protestant churches—with two or three exceptions—*directly* and *in form*, is nevertheless adopted by the greater part of them *in fact*—as their practical exclusiveness, with respect to some branches of the Church universal, sufficiently shows. All history advises us, that a church no sooner loses the inward life of religion, than they forthwith contrive to substitute some external or outward form in its place.—Among other grounds of dependence for salvation in such cases, and that on which fallen churches chiefly rely, is found some sort of succession. Their descent, either natural or spiritual, from some distinguished personage, sect, or founder, is usually resorted to for this purpose, and insisted on with a tenacity that might well put the zeal of the living Christian himself to the blush.

The succession on which the Jewish Church vaunted themselves, when fallen, consisted in their natural descent from Abraham—a ground of reliance far more plausible than that of any other church who rest their claims upon mere external considerations; since God had entered into church covenant with them in the most solemn manner; engaging to “be their God,” and to regard and treat them as “his peculiar people.” But what did all this avail them when they went astray, “forsaking the Lord that bought them,” and even rejecting and crucifying their own and the world’s Divinely-promised and long-looked-for Messiah? What did their natural descent from “the father of the faithful”—their covenant relation to a covenant-keeping God—their boasted succession, avail them then? Let their ultimate judicial blindness, their final

rejection from being the Church and people of God, and the awful declaration of the Saviour that "publicans and harlots should go into the kingdom of God before them," answer !

The succession of the Church of Rome consists in their spiritual descent, through an unbroken line of episcopal ordination, from the apostles. But suppose she were even able to trace her ghostly lineage through what is called the apostolical succession to the chair of St. Peter, (which, by-the-by, is the merest fiction,) how would that establish her claim, not to be regarded as *the* Church to the exclusion of all others, but to be a church at all? since God himself has "written upon her forehead, Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth;" and declared, as "the judgment of the great whore," that she shall be finally and forever cast off, and, with "all whose names are not written in the book of life, go into perdition!" Let our High Church, Puseyite Episcopalians—whose only character and hopes, as a Church, depend on the same imaginary line of succession, and whose prospective end, it is to be feared, will be the same—ask themselves, whether the proud gratification they feel in their swelling, swaggering, anti-Christian exclusiveness, seems likely to compensate them for such a doom!

But there are many other churches, as we have already remarked, besides these, who virtually go in for succession; the only differences between the two classes, bating the profession, being, that the one found their pretensions on an unbroken line of episcopal ordination, and the other on some external rite, ceremony, or contrivance—better suited, as they suppose, to their respective organizations and purposes. But Catholics and Protestants alike, with few exceptions, maintain, in one way or another, the humbug of succession. It was of those churches, however, who maintain the figment of succession in *fact*, rather

than in form, that we intended more particularly to speak. And yet we have not lost our labor, nor missed the mark at which we aimed; since the position of the Church of Rome, and some others who formally maintain the succession scheme, so fully illustrates the principles on which it rests, that a brief allusion to one or two churches who are successionists in practice merely, will very appropriately introduce what it may be necessary to say concerning the Free Methodists in this connection.

The succession of the Anabaptists, as a body, consists in an unbroken line of immersionists—the authority to baptize, and the validity of the ordinance of baptism, having been lineally transmitted from some former institution or example down to the present time. But whether they run it back to “Roger Williams,” or “John of Leydon,” or “John the Baptist”—the forerunner of Christ,—the obscurity in which the subject is involved, and the conflicting opinions entertained concerning it, renders it extremely difficult to determine. Nor is it quite certain whether they consider it a saving ordinance, or not. Consistency, however, requires that they esteem it to be saving, believing that none can get to heaven except they go through this line; else why maintain it to the exclusion of all Christians, except their own order, from the table of the Lord? Why not commune with Christians who have not been immersed? God communes with them, of course, if they be Christians at all; and are they holier than God? But as their succession, whatever it may be, has not sufficed to save them from the general defection of the churches of our day, so neither will it suffice to save them from their doom, even though immersed by “John the Baptist” himself, and that too in the veritable old Jordan, whose waters they appear to esteem more sacred than all others upon the face of the earth.

The Methodist Episcopal Church claims to be in the

succession of Wesleyan Methodism : and so she was, once, as also in the succession of Apostolical Christianity ; for Wesleyan " Methodism is Christianity in earnest," and to be in the succession of the one, therefore, is to be in the succession of the other. But whether she is strictly and properly in the succession of either now, must depend on what we understand by succession. If taken in a merely nominal acceptation, or a continued visibility of the same organization, with the same forms of government and worship, then indeed she may, perchance, be in the Wesleyan succession. But if it be understood to consist in maintaining the same faith—doctrinal, experimental, and practical—the only true succession, it is extremely questionable whether her claim can be allowed. Like the ancient Sardinian Church, while she " has a few names " within her pale " who have not defiled their garments," yet, as a church, she evidently " has a name to live, and is dead." She may glory in her lineal descent from Wesley and the early Methodist fathers—as if their reputation for piety and zeal, coming down to her by a sort of imputation, were an all-sufficient passport to public favor and to heaven,—just as the Jewish Church trusted in their descent from Abraham and Moses, and the Catholic from St. Peter or the apostles ; while she has little more internal or spiritual conformity to her boasted Archetype or Founder than the present race of Jews or Catholics to theirs. Had she the faith and piety of the early Methodists, she might well talk of her Methodistic or Wesleyan succession ; but to succeed them in name and church organization merely—just as the Church of Rome succeeds the Apostolic Church—while she is practically, if not theoretically and professedly, opposed to holiness, their chief characteristic, but aggravates her guilt as a fallen Church, and shows her succession, much as she may value herself upon it, to be miserable delusion.

Strictly and properly speaking, (if we have a correct understanding of the matter,) the Free Methodist Church, instead of the Episcopal Methodists, are in the Apostolico-Wesleyan succession; and we doubt not that all who look at the history of the two denominations, respectively, in the light of our standard authorities on the subject of succession, will be of the same opinion. She has the faith, the practice, the spirit, the life and the power of pure Wesleyan Methodism; therefore she is in the Wesleyan Methodist succession according to our own standards.

Thomas Powell, a Wesleyan minister, maintains, (giving a host of the fathers, with Wesley and Watson and other modern divines to the same effect,) that "The only true succession essential to the existence of a Christian Church, is the succession of faith, of truth of doctrine, and holiness of life." And then adds, "God has always had a true Church: and he always will have a true Church. The gates of hell have never prevailed against it, and we are assured by Himself that they never shall. The Church (he proceeds,) has always stood, as to its foundation, on *the truth, and faithfulness, and power of God*; and never on any ceremonies or circumstances of church government, or any *order of men: thus shall it stand FOREVER.*" The language of the venerable Bishop White, corroborative of the above, as quoted by Mr. Powell, is, "*Wheresoever the true faith contained in the Scriptures is professed and embraced, there is the whole and full nature of an Apostolical Church.*" And Whitaker, also, quoted by the same author, and to the same effect, says, "FAITH is the soul of succession; which faith being wanting, the naked succession of persons is like *a dead carcass without the soul.*"

If, then, the apostolic succession itself is of no avail without a living, loving, obedient faith in Christ—and they are no Church even, whatever may be their external relation to the apostolic see, without this evangelical faith,

—how superlatively ridiculous it were to pique ourselves upon the simple circumstances that we are nominally in the succession of John Wesley and the early Methodist fathers, and be forever harping upon “our glorious old Methodism,” having nothing but the shell—as if that were an all-sufficient guarantee for the realization of our cherished Christian hopes and prospects. We would by no means take it upon ourselves to determine the moral status of the dear old Church with which we have been connected for more than half a century—we leave this in better hands; but judging of her by the criterion above laid down, we must honestly doubt whether she is now in the true succession, either apostolical or Wesleyan. Much less can we admit that she is there to the exclusion of the youngest and last-born member of the great Methodist family, whom she disdainfully refuses to recognize or fellowship in that relation.

But leaving her to her fate—feeling that she is in the hands of One who is infinitely better qualified to dispose of her according to the principles of truth and justice than we can pretend to be—we feel bound to say, that in our humble opinion, the Free Methodist Church, according to our own authorities and standards of judgment in the premises, is truly and properly in the Apostolico-Wesleyan succession; that she is of course in the succession of pure, primitive Methodism; nay, that she is, *de facto*, the Methodist Episcopal Church itself, the ground she occupies having been vacated by her fallen predecessor—the Church that now bears that forfeited name.

It only remains, before coming to the Appendix, to administer to our young and rising Church the following very impressive apostolical admonition: “Well: because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear: for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he spare not thee.”

APPENDIX.

WE shall here, according to promise, present to our readers the article entitled "New-school Methodism," published in the *Northern Independent* over the signature of Rev. B. T. Roberts, that they may see the ostensible ground of the Genesee Conference for expelling a distinguished member of their body, whom they had previously determined to get rid of or destroy in some way for his faithful denunciations of the sins of the Church, and earnest devotion to the cause of God and Methodism.

NEW-SCHOOL METHODISM.

The best seed, sown from year to year on poor soil, gradually degenerates. The acorn, from the stately oak, planted upon the arid plain, becomes a stunted shrub.—Ever since the fall, the human heart has proved a soil unfavorable to the growth of truth.

Noxious weeds flourish everywhere spontaneously, while the useful grains require diligent cultivation.

Correct principles implanted in the mind need constant attention, or monstrous errors will overtop them and root them out. Every old nation tells the tale of her own degeneracy, and points to the golden age when truth and justice reigned among men.

Religious truth is not exempt from this liability to corruption. "God will take care of his own cause," is a maxim often quoted by the cowardly and the compromising, as an apology for their base defection. When His servants are faithful to the trusts reposed in them, it is

gloriously true; when they waver, His cause suffers. The churches planted by the Apostles, and watered by the blood of martyrs, now outvie heathenism itself in their corruptions. No other parts of the world are so inaccessible to gospel truth as those countries where the Romish and Greek Churches hold dominion.

As a denomination, we are just as liable to fall by corrupting influences, as any were that have flourished before us. We enjoy no immunity from danger. Already there is springing up among us a class of preachers whose teaching is very different from that of the fathers of Methodism. They may be found here and there throughout our Zion; but in the Genesee Conference they act as an associate body. They number about thirty. During the last session of this Conference, they held several secret meetings, in which they concerted a plan to carry their measures and spread their doctrines. They have openly made the issue in the Conference. It is divided. Two distinct parties exist. With the one or the other every preacher is in sympathy. This difference is fundamental. It does not relate to things indifferent, but to those of the most vital importance. It involves nothing less than the nature itself of Christianity.

In showing the doctrines of the New-School Methodists, we shall quote from *The Advocate* of the sect, published at Buffalo. This is the organ of the party. It is sustained by them. They act as its agents. Where their influence prevails, it is circulated to the exclusion of other religious papers. Its former title was "*The Buffalo Christian Advocate*." But since its open avowal of the new doctrines, it has significantly dropped from its caption the expressive word, "*Christian*." This omission is full of meaning. It is, however, highly proper, as we shall see when we examine its new theory of religion. We commend the editor for this instance of honesty. It is

now simply "*The Advocate*;" that is, the *only* Advocate of the tenets it defends.

The New-School Methodists affect as great a degree of liberalism as do Theodore Parker and Mr. Newman. They profess "charity" for everybody except their brethren of the Old School. In an article on "Creeds," published in *The Advocate* of April 16th, under the signature of W., the Rev. writer—a prominent New-School minister—lays it on to "the sects whose watchword is a creed," in a manner not unworthy of Alexander Campbell himself. He says, "No matter how holy and blameless a man's life may be, if he has the temerity to question any tenet of 'orthodoxy,' he is at once, in due ecclesiastical form, consigned to the Devil, as a heretic and infidel. Thus are fetters of a spiritual despotism thrown around the human reason. . . . And so it has come to pass, that in the estimation of multitudes, the teachings of Paul are eclipsed by the theories of Calvin, and the writings of John Wesley are held in higher veneration than the inspired words of St. John." Is not that a modest charge?

But their theory of religion is more fully set forth in the leading editorial of *The Advocate* for May 14th, under the title, "Christianity a Religion of Beneficence rather than of Devotion." Though it appears as editorial, we have good reason to believe that it was written by a leading New-School member of the Genesee Conference. It has not been disavowed by that party. Though it has been before the public for months, no one has expressed a dissent from its positions. It is fair to presume that it represents the views of the leaders of this new movement.

It says, "Christianity is not characteristically a system of devotion. *It has none of those features* which must distinguish a religion grounded on the idea, that to adore the Divine character is the most imperative obligation resting upon human beings. It enjoins the observance of

but very few sacred rites ; nor does it prescribe any *particular mode* for paying homage to the Deity. It eschews all exterior forms, and teaches that they who worship God must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

The Old-School Methodists hold, that "to adore the Divine character" is the most imperative obligation resting upon human beings; that Christianity has *all* of those features that must distinguish a religion grounded on this idea. That he who worships God rightly, will, as a necessary consequence, possess all social and moral virtues; that the gospel does not leave its votaries to choose, if they please, the degrading rites of heathenism, or the superstitious abominations of Popery; but prescribes prayer and praise, and the observance of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, "as particular modes of paying homage to the Deity." That there is no necessity for antagonism, as Infidels and Universalists are wont to affirm, between spiritual worship and the forms of worship instituted by Christ.

The following snceer is not unworthy of Thomas Paine himself. It falls below the dignity of Voltaire. "Christianity in nowise gives countenance to the supposition, that the Great Jehovah is so affected with the infirmity of vanity, as to receive, with *peculiarly* grateful emotions, the attention and offerings which poor human creatures may pay directly to Him in worship."

The above may be sufficient to show what Christianity is not, in the opinion of these New-School Divines. Let us now see what it is. "The characteristic idea of this system is benevolence; and its practical realization is achieved in beneficence. It consecrates the principle of charity, and instructs its votaries to regard good works as the holiest sacrifice, and the most acceptable which they can bring to the Almighty.

* * * * *

“Whatever graces may be necessary to constitute the inner Christian life, the chief and principal one of these, is *love to man*. . . . The great condition upon which one becomes a participant of the gospel salvation, is—some practical exhibition of self-abnegation, of self-sacrifice for the good of others. *Go sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor*, were the only terms of salvation which Christ proposed to the young man who, otherwise, was not far from the kingdom of heaven.”

The Old-School Methodists hold that benevolence is only *one of the fruits* of true religion, but by no means the thing itself. In their view, “the principal grace of the inner Christian life” is LOVE TO GOD; and “the most acceptable sacrifice” we can render HIM, is a broken and contrite heart. They teach that the great condition upon which one becomes “a participant of the gospel salvation” is FAITH IN CHRIST—preceded by repentance. They read in the gospel that the young man referred to, was commanded by Christ to “*Come, take up the cross and follow me*.” The giving of his goods to the poor was only preparatory to this.

The New-School Methodists hold that justification and entire sanctification, or holiness, are the same; that when a sinner is pardoned, he is at the same time made holy; that all the spiritual change he may henceforth expect, is simply a growth in grace. When they speak of “holiness,” they mean by it the same as do evangelical ministers of those denominations which do not receive the doctrines taught by Wesley and Fletcher on this subject.

According to the Old-School Methodists, merely justified persons, while they do not outwardly commit sin, are conscious of sin still remaining in the heart—such as pride, self-will, and unbelief. They continually feel a heart bent to backsliding; a natural tendency to evil; a proneness to depart from God, and cling to the things of earth.—

Those that are sanctified wholly are saved from all inward sin, from evil thoughts, and evil tempers. No wrong temper, none contrary to love, remains in the soul. All the thoughts, words and actions, are governed by pure love.

The New-School ministers have the frankness to acknowledge that their doctrines are not the doctrines of the Church. They have undertaken to correct the teachings of her standard authors. In the same editorial of *The Advocate*, from which we have quoted so largely, we read: "So in the exercises and means of grace instituted by the Church, it is clearly apparent that respect is had, rather to the excitation of the religious sensibilities, and the culture of emotional piety, than the development of genial and humane dispositions, and the formation of habits of active, vigorous goodness."

Here the evils complained of are charged upon "*the exercises and means of grace, instituted by the Church.*"—They do not result from a perversion of the means of grace, but are the effects *intended* to be produced in their institution. It is THE CHURCH, then, that is wrong—and so far wrong that she does not even *aim* at the development of proper Christian character. "The means of grace," in the use of which an Asbury, an Olin, a Hedding, and a host of worthies departed and living, were nurtured to spiritual manhood, must be abolished; and others, adapted to the "development of genial and humane dispositions," established in their place. The lodge must supersede the class and the love-feast; and the old-fashioned prayer-meeting must give way to the social party! Those who adopted or founded "the exercises and means of grace instituted by the Church"—Paul and Peter, the Martyrs, and Reformers, Luther and Wesley, Calvin and Edwards—all have failed to comprehend the true idea of Christianity; for these all held that the sinner was justified

by *Faith in Christ*, and not by "some practical exhibition of self-abnegation." The honor of distinctly apprehending and clearly stating the true genius of Christianity, was reserved for a few divines of the nineteenth century!

In our next we shall show the usages and results, so far as developed, of New-School Methodism.

USAGES—RESULTS.

Differing thus in their views of religion, the Old and New-School Methodists necessarily differ in their measures for its promotion. The latter build stock churches, and furnish them with pews to accommodate a select congregation; and with organs, melodeons, violins, and professional singers, to execute difficult pieces of music for a fashionable audience. The former favor free churches, congregational singing, and spirituality, simplicity and fervency in worship. They endeavor to promote revivals, deep and thorough; such as were common under the labors of the Fathers; such as have made Methodism the leading denomination of the land. The leaders of the New Divinity movement are not remarkable for promoting revivals; and those which do, occasionally, occur among them, may generally be characterized as the editor of *The Advocate* designated one which fell under his notice, as "*splendid revivals*." Preachers of the old stamp urge upon all who would gain heaven, the necessity of self-denial—non-conformity to the world—purity of heart and holiness of life; while the others ridicule singularity, encourage by their silence—and in some cases by their own example, and that of their wives and daughters—"the putting on of gold and costly apparel," and treat with distrust all professions of deep Christian experience. When these desire to raise money for the benefit of the Church, they have recourse to the selling of pews to the highest bidder; to parties of pleasure, oyster suppers, fairs, grab-

bags, festivals and lotteries. The others, for this purpose, appeal to the love the people bear to Christ. In short, the Old-School Methodists rely for the spread of the gospel upon the agency of the Holy Ghost and the purity of the Church. The New-School Methodists appear to depend upon the patronage of the worldly, the favor of the proud and the aspiring, and the various artifices of worldly policy.

If this diversity of opinion and of practice among the ministers of our denomination was confined to one Conference, it would be comparatively unimportant. But unmistakable indications, show that prosperity is producing upon us, as a denomination, the same intoxicating effect that it too often does upon individuals and societies. The change, by the General Conference of 1852, in the rule of Discipline requiring that all our houses of worship should be built plain, and with free seats; and that of the last General Conference, in the section respecting dress, show that there are already too many among us, who would take down the barriers that have hitherto separated us from the world. The fact that the removal is gradual, so as not to excite too much attention and commotion, renders it none the less alarming.

Every lover of the Church must feel a deep anxiety to know what is to be the result of this new order of things. If we may judge by its effects in the Genesee Conference, since it has held sway there, it will prove disastrous to us as a denomination. It so happened, either by accident or by management, at the division of the Genesee Conference, eight years ago, that most of the unmanageable veterans, who could neither be induced to depart from the heaven-honored usages of Methodism, by the specious cry of "progress," nor to wink at such departures by the mild expostulations of Eli, "Why do you thus, my son?" had their destination upon the east side of Genesee river. The

first year after the division, the East Genesee Conference had twenty superannuated preachers; the Genesee Conference but five. "Men of progress," in the prime of life, went west of the river and took possession of the Conference. For the most part, they have borne sway there ever since. Of late, the young men of the Conference, uniting with the fathers—and thus united, comprising a Majority of the Conference—have endeavored to stop this "progress" away from the old paths of Methodism. But the "progressives" make up in management what they lack in numbers. Having free access at all times to the ears of the Episcopacy, they have succeeded, for the most part, in controlling the appointments to the districts and most important stations. If, by reason of his obvious fitness, any impracticable adherent of primitive Methodism has been appointed to a district or first-class station, he has usually been pursued, with untiring diligence, and hunted from his position before his constitutional term expired.

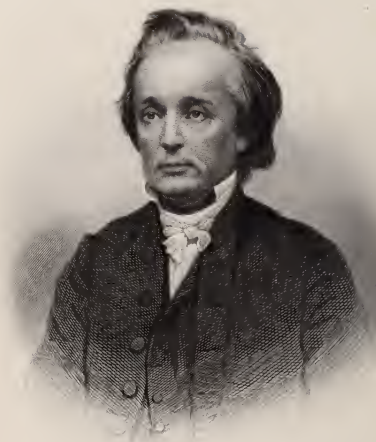
In the bounds of the Genesee Conference, the people generally are prepossessed in favor of Methodism. During the past eight years, there have been no external causes operating there against our prosperity, that do not operate at all times and in all places. Within this period, the nominal increase of the Church in that Conference has been but seven hundred and eighty. The East Genesee Conference has had an increase, within the same time, of about two thousand five hundred. In order to have simply kept pace with the population, there should have been, within the bounds of the Genesee Conference, one thousand six hundred and forty-three more members than there are at present. That is, in eight years, under the reign of New Divinity, the Church has suffered, within the bounds of this one Conference, a relative loss of fifteen per cent. in members.

The Seminary at Lima, at the time of the division second to none in the land, has, by the same kind of management, been brought to the brink of financial ruin.

We have thus endeavored to give a fair and impartial representation of New-School Methodism. Its prevalence in one Conference has already, as we have seen, involved it in division and disaster. Let it generally prevail, and the glory will depart from Methodism. She has a special mission to accomplish. This is, not to gather into her fold the proud and fashionable, the devotees of pleasure and ambition, but, "to spread scripture holiness over these lands." Her doctrines and her usages, her hymns, her history and her spirit, her noble achievements in the past and her bright prospects for the future, all forbid that she should adopt an accommodating, compromising policy, pandering to the vices of the times. Let her go on, as she has done, insisting that the great cardinal truths of the gospel shall receive a living embodiment in the hearts and lives of her members, and Methodism will continue to be the favored of Heaven, and the joy of the earth. But let her come down from her position, and receive to her communion all those lovers of pleasure, and lovers of the world, who are willing to pay for the privilege, and it needs no prophet's vision to foresee that Methodism will become a dead and corrupting body—endeavoring in vain to supply, by the erection of splendid churches, and the imposing performance of powerless ceremonies, the manifested glory of the Divine presence, which once shone so brightly in all her sanctuaries.

"Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls."

B.



J. W. Redguelis

REV. J. W. REDFIELD, M. D.

BY REV. B. T. ROBERTS.

THOSE of our readers who were personally acquainted with Dr. Redfield cannot fail to appreciate the admirable likeness of him with which the present number of the *Earnest Christian* is embellished. Our artist has done his work well. That calm face will bear study. It bespeaks a soul at peace with God and man. Divine grace has imparted a holy serenity to a countenance naturally beautiful and expressive. Yet, those who knew him only in the pulpit, will be disappointed. The fire is wanting. We never knew a man who, in the pulpit, was so unlike what he was in social life. He was everywhere the man of God. Among his friends he was as gentle, and sensitive, and shrinking as a woman; but in the pulpit he was bold and fearless, and uncompromising as John Knox or Martin Luther. Never, since the days of St. Paul, was there one who could more truthfully say, "I have not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God." The inspiration apparent in his countenance was such as could not be expressed by any artistic skill. But the likeness we furnish is one well worthy of preservation. It will give to those who never saw him a better idea than any description could, of the appearance of one of the most successful evangelists of the nineteenth century.

John Wesley Redfield was born on the 23d day of June, 1810. From his earliest childhood, a strong impression followed him that God designed him for the Gospel ministry. But so disagreeable to him was the thought, that he kept the matter a secret from his dearest friends. His

fears that so unwelcome a fate awaited him were greatly strengthened by what was afterwards told him of the impressions of his mother concerning him. She was a woman of prayer, who feared the Lord, and his secret was with her. She assured her confidential friends, from his infancy, that God would call him to the Gospel ministry. Her faith in this respect never wavered; but when the neighbors came in and found him, to all appearance, dying, and told her so, her reply was: "He will not die, but live to preach the Gospel."

When about eight years of age, and just able to write, he tried to compose a sermon, and then borrowed a copy of Wesley's sermons to compare the merits of his own by. In great despondency he said to himself, with a sigh, "I never can compose such a sermon; I do not know anything about religion, and I am sure I can never preach." Still he could not throw off the unpleasant impression that he must preach the Gospel; but in every plan of life he was swayed by this dreaded, and yet absorbing thought.

In his fourteenth year he had such an alarming view of his sinful state, that he really feared he was past all hope of mercy. He tried, as he thought, to the utmost, to obtain the pardon and favor of God, but in vain. His agony would not let him sleep, and he was aroused by every unusual sound. Hope fled for a season. He was tempted to provoke the Almighty to destroy him, that without the guilt of self-murder he might know the worst of his case, and also avoid making his condition in eternity worse by a farther life of sin. While in this state of despair, he heard of a Camp-Meeting. As the friends spoke of the probable conversion of sinners, hope revived, and he thought, "If I go, then I may get religion." He obtained permission, and went with a neighbor. At the close of the first sermon, he, with a goodly number of penitents, bowed to the altar and implored the mercy of God. They

cried aloud with great earnestness. This, at first, greatly disturbed him. But seeing those who tried it, soon becoming happy in God, and all his own efforts proving unsuccessful, he concluded to pray aloud, and cried out,—“Lord be merciful to me, a sinner.” He was shocked at the sound of his own voice, but pride was mortified, and he felt fully committed and disgraced for life. He went out alone into the woods, and there, under a large tree, upon his knees, he made the solemn vow to take Jesus for his only Saviour. “Instantly,” he said, “as my faith ventured on Jesus, my burden was gone. I was filled with inexpressible delight, and before I was aware of what I was doing, I found myself on my feet shouting, Glory to God! All nature seemed in harmony, like a beautiful and well-tuned harp, singing praises to the Most High, and my heart could beat time to such unearthly music as I now heard all around, above, beneath, within. If this is religion, I said to myself, the world will now very soon be converted, for I shall tell every one with whom I meet, and I can tell it so convincingly that they will certainly believe, and seek, and find. So exalted, and so valuable did salvation seem, that I felt I could have given my life to impart it to the world.”

He first met a young man, and immediately spoke to him about the love of Jesus, expecting to see him start in haste to seek the pearl of great price. But he was doomed to disappointment. The young man treated his message with contempt. But the zeal of the young convert was not abated by this rebuff. On his way home he visited the house of a relative, who had a large family, none of whom professed religion. He told them what great things Jesus had done for his soul. But he seemed to them like one who mocked. He, however, pressed the subject, and finally obtained permission to pray with them. He left them under conviction, and in a short time had the hap-

piness of hearing that the whole family professed religion.

On reaching home, he set up a family altar in his father's house. He went from house to house, and from town to town, to carry the glad news that Jesus had come to save. He soon had the unspeakable pleasure of having a very large number of old acquaintances to go with him in the narrow way.

Dr. Fisk, who used to visit his father's house, took a deep interest in his welfare. He suggested that he had better go to Wilbraham Academy to study. Young Redfield saw that the old subject of preaching was at the bottom of this plan, and that the course he was pursuing would sooner or later lead him into this field of labor.—All his abhorrence of preaching returned, and he resolved to quit the field at once. He conceived that the most awful responsibility rested upon the minister of the gospel, and he felt that he could not assume it unless he knew to a certainty that God had called him to it. His impressions he attributed to the influence of friends, who were urging him to enter upon the discharge of his duty.

Obtaining permission of his father, he left home to go to a distant place to enter into the employment of an artist. The Lord met him in a wonderful manner on his way, and endeavored to divert him from his purpose, and lead him to enter upon his mission. But, with astonishing obstinacy, he went on, and at last reached the destined place. But here such horror fell upon him that he dared not remain. He left the place and did not venture to look back until he had passed completely out of sight.

He returned home resolved to live religious, but determined to abandon all thoughts about ever preaching, unless God should, by unmistakable signs, reveal it as his will that he should undertake this work. There he continued, restless and comfortless, until the next fall, mourning over

his sad fate, and wondering why he should be the victim of impressions that he could not throw off, and yet have no certain means to settle the matter.

He would inform no one of the corroding anxiety which was eating away at his very vitals. He fasted and prayed; he kept watch-nights all alone, he wandered about in the fields till the sun made his appearance in the morning; he prayed kneeling in the snow, until his clothes were frozen to the earth, seeking to have the question as to whether he was to preach the gospel or not settled in such a way as to render doubts impossible. When evidences that should have been satisfactory to the most skeptical were given, he would listen to the suggestion that, perhaps, it was all a delusion. This inward conflict continued until all appetite for food was gone, sleep departed from his eyes, and he stood trembling upon the very verge of insanity. At last he yielded. He had studiously sought to conceal his impressions of duty from every one; but as soon as his decision was made, a pious sister entered his room, her face red with weeping, and handing him a Bible and hymn-book, said: "Brother John, the victory is gained." He could contain himself no longer, but answered her only with sobs and tears. She had been secretly praying for him during his struggle.

Going among strangers, to a field of labor to which, for a long time, he had been strangely and supernaturally directed, he entered at once upon his work, visiting from house to house, and talking in the most searching manner with the inmates, upon the subject of their personal salvation, and praying with them whenever permission to do so could be obtained. By some he was kindly received. Others threatened him with personal violence. Yet there was scarcely a house which he visited, but that he was sent for soon after to pray with some of the inmates. The hand of the Lord was with him, and He set His seal in

the most signal manner upon his efforts. Many will thank God in eternity that he sent the boy-preacher to bring to their reluctant ears the tidings of salvation. At the request of the circuit preachers he visited a prominent Universalist, whose controlling influence was exerted against the cause of God. They had plied him, in vain, with all the arguments they could command. Young Redfield laid the matter before the Lord, and obtaining directions from him how to proceed, he went in his name. As he approached the Universalist his own heart was melted, and weeping over him, he said:

"Sir, I have a message from the great God to you; it is to repent and seek salvation, or you will be damned."

"I don't believe in your damnation doctrine," said the man.

To this the young evangelist made no reply, but pressed him for an answer. "Tell me, will you obey God and shun damnation?"

Again he tried to divert the attack from the heart to the head.

"My message," said the youth, "is from God, will you obey it?"

When the Universalist found that he could not get up a discussion, he became very angry, and ordered him to leave the house, or he would give him a beating, for he would not be talked to in such a manner by a boy.

"You will strike me," said the young disciple, "at the peril of God's displeasure, for that God who has sent me on this errand of mercy will certainly stand by me and defend me; so touch me if you dare, while I am in God's business."

Before the interview closed, his wife, with tears, asked, "O will you pray for us?" Man and wife kneeled, and God answered prayer and broke his opposition to the work. Another Universalist opened his doors for prayer

meeting, and the work of God swept all over that region of country.

The sufferings which young Redfield endured while burdened for souls were such that he would have left the work, had not the Lord, by signal manifestations of his displeasure at such a course, deterred him from so doing. At the request of the Presiding Elder he went to a Quarterly Conference to receive a license to preach, with a view of traveling a circuit under the Presiding Elder. Before opening the Conference, the Elder told a ludicrous anecdote, at which most present burst into a glee of laughter, in which the Elder heartily joined; and then, in the midst of their merriment said, "Let us pray." This was too much for the sensitive conscience of the young evangelist. He fell to reasoning thus: "Does this Elder believe the Bible? Did Jesus set such an example of trifling over a perishing world? Are sinners passing away every hour to the judgment, unprepared? Was this like Paul, who labored night and day, with tears, for the salvation of sinners? Am I wild or blind? All I can see is the Saviour of the world, staggering under the weight of its redemption, and a world in proud procession on their way to eternal night. If the Bible is true, the world is on the eve of a terrible tragedy, passing to eternity, unprepared. I hardly dare stop to sleep, lest men should be lost while I am at rest. There must be a mistake somewhere, and I am, most likely, the mistaken one. That Elder is a man of mature years, and in all probability was, when young, as zealous as I am. He has probably found out that religion is a delusion, and now continues to preach for the profit. I will never take a license until I can go and settle the question as to the truth or falsity of the Christian system of religion."

He went home, resolved to lead a pious life, and, in the meanwhile, settle the claims of the Bible, by the light of

reason. He did not realize that he had undertaken a task too great for him. To avoid the importunity of friends who urged him to do his duty, by preaching the gospel, he went some hundred miles from home; but in less than a fortnight was beset by the same exhortations. He went on still farther, but was soon annoyed in the same way.—He left, and resolved at the next place to make no profession of religion. He soon found himself an infidel. He was now but little disturbed by day, but at night was continually annoyed by dreams of preaching. The dark gloom of infidelity settled upon him, but he found no rest. The study of Anatomy, and of Paley's Natural Theology saved him from atheism.

We pass over, for the present, the long and sad, but interesting chapter of his endeavors to get away from the duty to which God had, in so striking a manner, called him. The voyage to Tarshish has always proved disastrous to those who have undertaken it. God has a thousand rods for the backs of those who know his will, but who do it not. Young Redfield suffered his severest chastisement, inflicted in love for his salvation. He married—but domestic calamities of the most crushing character overwhelmed him. His nearest and dearest friends—his father and mother—were suddenly called away. He was left alone in the world. The hand of disease was laid upon him, and three several times he was brought to the very verge of the grave. Once the cholera nearly carried him off. At another time he left a seat that was shivered by lightning, just in time to avoid the withering stroke. Then consumption well nigh did its fearful work. Each time he was spared, as he believed, in answer to prayer, and upon his promising God that he would do his duty.—At last he made a final and complete surrender. His flesh was wasted away, his strength gone, the hectic flush was upon his cheek, and cold night sweats contributed to hur-

ry him to his account. He prayed; and vowed to do his duty. After a night of prayer, about two o'clock in the morning, the answer came, "You may live while you preach, but no longer."

The next Friday evening he was able to cross the street to attend a Love Feast in the M. E. Church. He had been seated but a short time, before the minister, a stranger, came to him, and after a little conversation, said to him, "You must preach for me next Sabbath morning." He endeavored to excuse himself, but in vain. The preacher had spiritual discernment, and saw that he had a work to do for God. The intervening time was passed in dreadful agony. Sabbath came, and he went to the pulpit, as one would go to meet a fearful fate. He arose, but was too weak to stand, only as he supported himself by the pulpit. He had not strength to hold the Hymn Book. He gave out his text, when he says: "It seemed that an unearthly power seized me and held me up, and gave me volume of voice and sustained me to the end."

He sat down, hoping that this specimen of his preaching would prevent any further invitations. But to his surprise and sorrow, the minister in charge said, "You must preach for me again," on such a night. He plead to be excused, but the minister was inflexible, and laid his commands upon him. This service over, he told him he must preach the next Sunday night, and gave notice accordingly. When the time came, the church, a large one in the city of New York, was crowded, gallery, aisles and vestibule. As he took his text, he says, "An unearthly power so lifted me up that it seemed to me that my feet only touched the earth, but my whole head, heart and body were in heaven, and the unearthly thrills of power which I then felt I never can describe. I can only compare it to a sense of power put into my hand for that hour, which could shake a world, or sway an influence that would move

a nation. I had not finished my preaching when, without an invitation, the people arose and rushed up to the altar, crying for mercy. The space around and within the altar was crowded, and when there was no more room, the preacher asked all in the house who desired religion to arise, when it was judged that five hundred arose for prayers, and the number converted justified the estimate."

Thus commenced the final efforts of one whose fidelity and power in the pulpit surpassed, beyond all comparison, those of any man to whom we ever listened.

From this time, till the hand of disease was laid upon him, he went steadily forward, laboring as an evangelist. He was one of the most successful revivalists in the country.

Dr. Redfield has left a full account of the efforts which he put forth for the revival of primitive Christianity. In the brief sketch which we now give, we shall confine ourselves mainly to such facts as fell under our own observation.

We first heard Dr. Redfield preach in the city of Middletown, Connecticut. The state of religion in the church was extremely low. Professing Christians were chiefly distinguished for their conformity to the world. The Methodists had ceased to be persecuted, and were fast becoming a proud and fashionable people. In the University, intellectual rivalry had well nigh supplanted zeal for the cause of God. But a small proportion of the students professed religion, and these exhibited but too little of the power of godliness. Dr. Redfield's preaching created a profound sensation. His deep-toned piety, the Divine unction that rested upon him, his fervent, moving, appeals to the Throne of Grace, and his unearthly, overpowering eloquence, disarmed criticism, even in that congregation of critics, and prepared the way for the reception of the searching truths he uttered. Had he lowered the stand-

ard to suit the pride and prejudices of his hearers, his popularity would have been unbounded. But, like General Jackson, he never compromised, but always went in for a clean victory or a clean defeat. He insisted upon the Bible standard of entire conformity to the will of God in all things. The church was crowded, and the people seemed amazed. Such exhibitions of truth they had never listened to before. It was for some time doubtful how the scale would turn. Dr. Olin heard of the commotion. He was unwilling to take the representations of any one, but arose from a sick bed, and went and heard for himself. His majestic intellect, and deep experience in the things of God, could not easily be imposed upon; and a candid hearing satisfied him both of the sincerity and the soundness of the preacher. "This, brethren," said he, "is Methodism, and you must stand by it." His word was law. The faculty, the official members, and the church received and endorsed the truth. Such a work of God as followed we never witnessed. Professors in the college—men of outwardly blameless lives, saw they were not right with God, frankly confessed it, and, laying aside their official dignity, went forward for prayers. The city and adjoining country were moved as by the breath of the Lord. For some eight or ten weeks, the altar was crowded with penitents—from fifty to a hundred coming forward at a time. The conversions were generally very clear and powerful. Dr. Olin seconded the effort in the University, and went beyond his strength in exhorting the students and praying with them. This great man never seemed so great as in prayer. Then he seemed clothed with the

Awful majesty of man,
Who talketh often with his God.

Nearly all the young men in the college were converted, and of the converts, a large number became ministers of the Gospel. The fruits of the revival remain, and have

been multiplying ever since. Five years after, we were stationed at the Niagara-street Church, Buffalo. This was the oldest Methodist Church in the city. They had formerly enjoyed powerful revivals of religion, and a few years before, under the faithful labors of Rev. E. Thomas, the standard of holiness had been raised, and many of the members entered into the enjoyment of this blessing. But for a few years immediately preceding our labors there, a different tone of piety had been inculcated. But few made a definite profession of holiness, and a system of worldly policy had been partially inaugurated. We found the congregation run down, and the membership discouraged. We made an effort for a revival of religion. Dr. Redfield, at our invitation, seconded by the official board, came to our assistance. A deep interest was excited; the members began the work of thorough self-examination; and many were brought out into the clear light of full salvation. Some then saved have since proved most efficient laborers in the Master's vineyard. The church was crowded, and a deep solemnity prevailed the congregation. Just as everything betokened a sweeping victory, and a great ingathering of souls, the general anniversary of the Missionary Society was held in that church. For several days, including the Sabbath, the aid of eloquence and wit, and personal and church rivalry, was invoked to raise money. A spirit of levity prevailed, and conviction was dissipated. Ministers occupying a prominent official position, who had come to attend the anniversary, exerted among the members an influence very damaging to the work of God, which had been commenced. When we resumed our meetings, we found that the wheels of the car of salvation were effectually blocked. The work was openly opposed by official members. Some, who had confessed they were not right, went no farther, but settled down as they were. A few were converted; but

it was impossible to restore the battle. Dr. Redfield left, saying in substance to the official members as he turned sorrowfully away, that "Ichabod" was written upon their walls; that they had opposed God, and he would forsake them unless they repented before him. The truth of his prediction has been astonishingly verified. After we left, the church began rapidly to run down. Various expedients of a worldly character were resorted to for the promotion of its prosperity. The house was rebuilt with architectural splendor; gothic chairs were introduced into the pulpit, and a gothic organ into the orchestra; ministers of acknowledged talent were brought from other Conferences, and appointed to preach there. Sociables and festivals were of common occurrence; and, to crown all, a great "clam-bake and chowder" party was held, in the interest of the church,—but all to no purpose. The beautiful edifice has passed into the hands of the Jews, and the society—the oldest bearing the Methodist name in the city—has been scattered. To-day there are not, in proportion to the population, one-half as many members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in that city, as there were twenty years ago.

In 1858, Dr. Redfield went to St. Louis—as he believed, by Divine direction—to labor for the salvation of souls. Crowds of eager listeners thronged the church to hear the thrilling truths he uttered. He was then a preacher in good standing in the M. E. Church. The preacher in charge of the principal M. E. Church became jealous.—The official board voted, and the preacher concurred in the vote, that the meetings should be placed in Dr. Redfield's hands for the period, I think, of three weeks. He held a few meetings, and the Spirit of the Lord continued to work in power. Many became convicted for full salvation, and some received the blessing for which they sought. While the work was going on in power, the preacher in charge took

the meetings out of Dr. Redfield's hands, and even refused him permission to preach. The congregation, seeing this, left the house, and a large number of the members, without consulting Dr. Redfield, left the church. They hired a church edifice on Sixth street, and Dr. Redfield preached the gospel to them there. Many souls were saved.

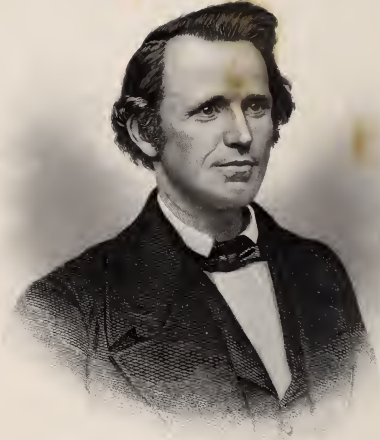
Application was made to the presiding elder to organize them into a New Methodist Episcopal Church. He gave them encouragement that he would do so, but afterwards refused to fulfil his promise.

Failing of recognition by the constituted ecclesiastical authorities, and feeling that they could not return to the church which they had left, they sent for us to aid them in effecting an organization.

After some weeks we went, and organized the **FIRST FREE METHODIST CHURCH** that was ever organized in the United States. Such parts of the Discipline of the M. E. Church were adopted as were applicable to their circumstances. Non-slaveholding was made a test of membership. On this account, several of the more wealthy members left.

This society has met with a succession of misfortunes, but the Lord has given it vitality to live through all, and we trust that a period of prosperity is before it.

This brief sketch of the labors of Dr. Redfield, may give those unacquainted with him some idea of his untiring zeal in his Master's service. It will require a volume to do anything like justice to his evangelical labors.



D. C. Kendall

SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF
REV. WM. C. KENDALL, A. M.

BY REV. B. T. ROBERTS.

THE likeness we have had engraved for this month's number is one of no ordinary man. It is of one whose whole energies were enlisted in the cause of Christ, to a degree that we do not commonly witness in these days.

William C. Kendall was a man of God. From the commencement to the close of his public career, he devoted himself, with singleness of aim and tenacity of purpose, to the one work of spreading scriptural holiness over the land.

He was above the medium height, strongly made, and capable of a great amount of labor. He would preach, and sing, and pray, more hours a day, than any man we ever knew. This may be owing, in part at least, to the fact that he kept the machinery well oiled. He did not get ahead of the Spirit. There was something noble and attractive in his appearance. His voice was clear, full and musical. His mind was solid rather than brilliant,—characterized more by the harmonious blending of all its powers than by the predominance of any single faculty. He was well educated—a graduate of the Wesleyan University at Middletown, Conn.,—a member of our class. In the sciences, in mathematics, in the languages, he stood well. In no one branch did he particularly excel; but, in his standing in all branches, was above the average.

It was as a Christian that he shone with bright particular lustre. The fear of God was always before his eyes, and he acted as if he felt that he was in His immediate presence. His faith was steady, strong, and unwavering.

A heavenly smile shone upon his countenance, and the joy of the Lord filled his soul.

We have seen him in trying circumstances—when almost every one else was discouraged; but his faith never wavered. When everything looked dark, and others were discouraged, he was wont to say, "This is Immanuel's land."

The session of the Genesee Conference of the M. E. Church, held in 1856 at Medina, was a time of great trial to those in Western New York who sympathized with the doctrine of holiness. The Rev. L. Stiles, presiding elder of Genesee district, who had taken strong ground in favor of the work of God then going on in the district, was tried on trumped-up charges. About thirty of the preachers, who were most violently opposed to the work of holiness, combined together and threatened the bishop that they would tear the Conference to pieces if Rev. L. Stiles, and I. C. Kingsley, presiding elder of the Niagara district—who also favored the work of holiness—were not removed, and men favorable to their views appointed in their places. The bishop for the sake of peace, yielded to their demands.

Bro. Stiles was acquitted of the charges; but he and Kingsley were both removed, and transferred to the Cincinnati Conference, and the enemies of holiness triumphed. When the appointments were read out, the friends of holiness—who were in ignorance up to this time of what was going on—were generally despondent. The bishop, about to close the session, called on "some one" to lead in singing, without designating the hymn. Bro. Kendall arose, his countenance beaming with courage, and with a clear, full voice, struck up—

"Come on my partners in distress."

The victors appeared vanquished. None of them joined in the singing, and some looked as if filled with rage. The

bishop made as if he would pray; but Bro. Kendall did not perceive it, and went on with the next verse:

“Who suffer with our Master here,
We shall before his face appear.”

The power of the Lord came down, and by the time the hymn was finished, those who had been ready a few moments before to give up everything for lost, felt inspired to go forth, and do battle valiantly for the truth.

Wm. C. Kendall was a man of prayer. He constantly breathed its atmosphere, and spent much time in its active exercise. We have no doubt but that, could the fact be known, it would be found that he spent more hours in prayer than he did in preaching or exhortation, though he preached on an average, we presume, five or six times a week.

Wherever he went he had uncommon success in getting souls saved. Everywhere he labored revivals attended his efforts; and the work that he promoted was of the most evangelical kind. People convicted under his labors confessed their sins, made restitution of the wrongs they had done, and struggled and prayed for deliverance, until the burden of guilt was removed, the power of sin broken, and the soul enabled to sing—

“My God is reconciled—
His pard’ning voice I hear.”

His special theme was holiness. He professed it, and he lived it. He used to say that he felt divinely inspired to preach holiness in every sermon. He preached it as a definite, distinct work of grace, and pressed it home, in public and in private, as the duty of every believer. Many were led, through his labors, into its enjoyment. And the holiness that he preached was not baptized gentility, but such a work of God in the soul as made one love right-

eousness and hate iniquity. He made no compromises.—As a consequence, though his spirit was always gentle, and his manners kind, yet he met with the fiercest opposition, and endured the bitterest persecution. But his temper was never excited, and he would never turn aside from his work to answer his assailants. It is utterly astonishing what revivals he had, even when opposed by those occupying high official positions in the Church. At Albion, the presiding elder was against him, and, through his influence, many of the official board; but he went steadily on with his work, and probably over two hundred were converted to God; and the fruit of this gracious revival remains to this day.

When it was determined to put down the work of God in the Genesee Conference at all hazards, Wm. C. Kendall was selected as the first victim. A bill of charges was preferred against him, which he was informed would be prosecuted at the next session of the Conference. But God shielded him from the malicious shafts of his persecutors, and after giving him one of the most powerful and extensive revivals, in one of the most barren and unpromising of fields, He sent down his chariot of fire and took him home. His death was one of the most triumphant of which we have any record. A short time before his departure, he said, “I have been swimming for two days in the waters of death, and they are like sweet incense all over me.” Waving his hands in holy triumph, he repeated—

“Bright angels are from glory come;
They’re round my bed, they’re in my room:
They wait to waft my spirit home—
All is well.”

Thus he passed away, where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.

With the following letter from his pen, we close this hasty sketch :

“ALBION, Feb’y 3d, 1855.

“DEAR BRO. PHELPS :—I was glad to hear from you, and of your prosperity in the ‘narrow way.’ I rejoice with Bro. Tinkham and the pilgrims in Taylorville that salvation descends there. That man of God, Dr. Redfield, is with us. We have had a hard battle. ‘The Doctor came a little more than a week since. His shots are finding a lodgment in the hearts of the King’s enemies. He says that ‘many are stuck down here in the slough of “I wont.”’ Our official members are our greatest hindrances. Entire holiness is gloriously prevailing : young converts and little ones are pressing into the possession of it, and their influence is being felt.

“We have good congregations—very attentive. Bro. Redfield is thought much of, and I have no doubt will be the means of great good. . . . The pilgrims are having a ‘fight of afflictions’ in this region, such as they never saw. You may know something of it when I say that I have received five letters of remonstrances lately—*i. e.*, before Bro. R. came. They have called us publicly ‘stumbling-blocks,’ and frequently ‘fanatics.’ They have said ‘the Devil was speaking through me ;’ that my course was ‘unhallowed,’ ‘unchristian,’ ‘self sufficient,’ ‘impudent,’ etc. One local preacher has said about town, of Dr. R., ‘That old *fanatic* ! he don’t know anything about preaching.’ But glory to God ! He ‘rules the whirlwind, and directs the storm.’ It is *breaking* ; and at the same time we hear talk that the trustees are going to close the *house* against us. We have no fears. It is one of the Devil’s scare-crows. Such times were never before in Albion. I wish you were here. . . .

“Our house was crammed Sunday night from top to bottom ; but salvation came. Last night, also. Two lost

their strength—a thing never before known in Albion until this winter. The people are filled with wonder and dismay. Officials, thus far for the Devil, begin to cower. There is great danger that Jesus will become popular. Dr. R. says it will take the Devil six months to repair the damages done his kingdom already. ‘My voice is still for war,’ is his watchword. We look for a mighty shaking. Glory to God for salvation!

“Your pilgrim brother,

“W. C. KENDALL.”

CHILI, Aug. 21st, 1857.

“DEAR BRO. PHELPS: . . . Since I saw you I have been at two camp-meetings—on Niagara district, and at Wyoming. At the former, the doctrine that we are entirely sanctified at conversion was boldly proclaimed. Bro. Wm. Cooley requested me to exhort in his place, and set the matter right. I occupied forty-five minutes in trying to do so, while Regency preachers prayed God to have mercy on me. I felt a good conscience when through.

“At Wyoming camp-meeting, I preached on the same subject. Bro. Abell arose, as soon as I was through, and backed what I had said. The presiding elder and two preachers then exhorted against me, after which Bro. Gorham, of the *Guide*, stood by me and the truth nobly, for which the presiding elder, as soon as the service closed, took him off into the woods. Some of the preachers roar against me like the ‘bulls of Bashan.’ I know not but that they will gore me, tear the ground, or something, at the Conference. I do not expect to remain at Chili. I go to Conference, not knowing what will befall me there; nor do I trouble myself at all. Naught can harm us while we abide in Christ.

“Your militant brother,

“W. C. KENDALL.”

“WEST FALLS, Nov. 5th, 1857.

“DEAR BRO. PHELPS: . . . You speak of our being scattered, and exhort me to keep up courage. I have no doubt that it is as I told some of my people: I was sent here to be whipped and starved, but I don't expect to receive either. I have five appointments, and preach three times each Sabbath. There is no pastor of any denomination living within the bounds of my parish. I preach in four comfortable meeting-houses—two of them Methodist, one Union; the fourth is owned by twelve sinners. Abundance of work—scarcely any religion. Only one *choir* to bother. No revival has been here for years. My health is good—my courage, also.

“We have just had our first quarterly meeting—a very good season. One soul soundly converted—a little of the first fruits. A few were a little displeased on finding the door closed, they being late to love-feast. The love-feast was a blessed season. Many saw the benefit of the Methodist rule. . . .

“Your brother *to the end of the war*,

“W. C. KENDALL.”

WEST FALLS, Erie Co., N. Y., Sept. 16th, 1857.

“DEAR BRO. ROBERTS: I find myself on my new field. Four or five appointments—no parsonage—one prayer-meeting—some fifty or sixty members; and they have been giving their preacher some two hundred and seventy-five dollars to live upon. The starvation system is in full blast in my case. I shall have a good year, however, if I have any year. One appointment is within ten miles of Buffalo; and I have serious thoughts of establishing one within the heart of the city itself. God may have designed, by my appointment, to pour out a vial of wrath or mercy on the *seat of the beast*. I intend to watch the openings of Providence, and enter them in the name of the Lord.

“I think of you often, and fear lest you will be discouraged in view of the state of things. The Regency pressed you hard in Le Roy; but it was not you they were after, but the blessed Jesus. I never realized the corrupt state of our Conference as when we were voting on your case. Such combination to crush a brother I did not suppose could be with us. As you said on the Conference floor, ‘Some of us will die hard.’ Don’t be discouraged, brother; we have not suffered much yet. As you said to me, on the night of your sentence and execution, ‘*It is an honor to be denounced by those men.*’ Such bribery as they practiced is a disgrace to any set of men who make no pretense to religion. But I must stop, or my head will be off next.

“I spent the Sabbath after Conference in Le Roy. Bro. — asked me to preach, after consultation with A. P. R., and to preach the first sermon. I had a very good time. The Lord blessed me. I have no doubt that he willed that I should spend that day in Le Roy. McE. invited Mrs. K. and myself home to dinner with him, and treated us as respectfully as he knew how. Bro. Shepard, a class-leader, said in class that he did not know the brother who had preached; but if that was Naziritism, he was a Nazarene. R. cautioned the people to ‘beware of troublers.’ Bro. Colton was very friendly. Bro. Anderson, just as McE. was about to pronounce the benediction, cried out, ‘Bro. Kendall will preach in the Congregational Church at five o’clock—the Lord will.’ The house was well filled, and we had another good time, and followed the sermon with a sort of love-feast. The N——s are becoming popular in Le Roy.

“I expect you, Bro. McC. and Bro. Cooley will see to the pilgrims in that northern region. Bro. Colton said, on Monday morning, as I was about to leave, that he thought that Bro. Roberts and myself ought to go through

the Conference holding meetings. Indeed, I was almost persuaded, as they would not locate me, to locate myself, and be free to go everywhere, preaching Jesus. We must circulate, as much as possible, among the people. God will give us this land yet. I give the Regency fair warning, the Lord helping, I will do my duty to them this year. My address is as above. Write, if you have a mind.

“Yours, through the war,

“W. C. KENDALL.”

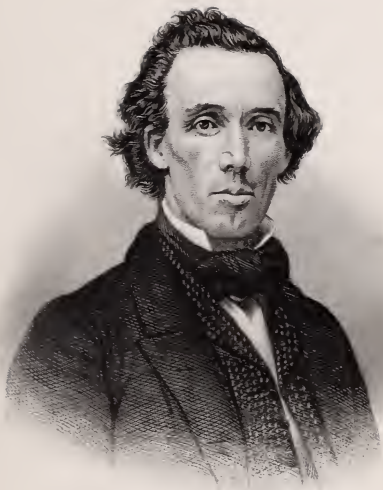
SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF
REV. LOREN STILES.

BY REV. B. T. ROBERTS.

TROPICAL plants do not thrive in northern latitudes. Heavenly virtues find on earth an uncongenial soil and climate. Unless they are watched with care and tenderly nurtured, they droop and die. It is a difficult task to get people converted to God; it is still more difficult to keep them converted. The natural tendency is, to mind earthly things.

The seven churches of Asia were planted by Apostolic hands. They were thoroughly instructed in the sublime doctrines of the Christian religion. Martyrs and confessors among them sealed their testimony with their own blood. Yet, while the Apostle John was yet living, they had all, both churches and ministers, with a single exception, backslidden from God. It has been so with churches ever since. No matter how pure they were at first, there has been a gradual decline in piety from generation to generation. Formality supplants spirituality, as weeds root out grain.

Probably no church ever changed more in its general aspect, in the same length of time, than the Methodist Episcopal Church has for the last twenty-five years. Many think the changes have been for the better; others, for the worse. All must admit that the plainness, simplicity, and separation from the world, that once characterized it, are gone. Some have resisted, with more or less tenacity of purpose, the change that has been going on—believing that it involved a loss of spirituality, and endangered greatly the salvation of souls.



Yours fraternally
L Stiles Jr



Prominent among this number was the Rev. Loren Stiles. From his education, his tastes, and his associations, it would naturally have been expected that he would have found his position among the most genteel and fastidious of the popular preachers of the day. But underneath that graceful exterior beat an honest heart. He did not worship at the shrine of expediency. He had the moral courage to follow his convictions. With him, the will of God, as he understood it, was supreme. If there was an apparent conflict between duty and interest, he never hesitated to discharge his duty, however great might be the sacrifice involved.

He had the natural gifts of an orator, and in any popular cause he would have gained a wide and high distinction. In stature he was above the medium height, and rather slim and spare in build, and active and easy in all his motions. A finely-formed forehead set off an intellectual-looking face to advantage. His voice was clear and musical, and could be heard distinctly by thousands. His sermons were well studied, able, convincing, eloquent, and at times overpowering. We heard him preach some eighteen years ago, on the Hamburg camp-ground, a sermon on "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" which seemed to carry all before it. The large congregation was spell-bound, and many penitents made their way at once to the altar, crying to God for the forgiveness of sins.

Our acquaintance with Loren Stiles commenced at Lima in 1845, when we were both students at the Seminary.—He stood well in his classes, and even then was distinguished for his abilities as a speaker. He professed, enjoyed, and lived religion. We shall never forget a season of prayer we had together, that summer, by the side of a large log in the woods. We had both intended to prosecute our studies farther than through the academic course;

but seeing the formality of the Seminary professors, we were afraid to go farther, for fear that we should lose our first love and become cold and formal. We felt that learning was good, but salvation was better. We wept and prayed before the Lord. We consecrated ourselves anew to Him, to be his for time and eternity. The Holy Spirit came down, and Divine assurance was given that God would keep us while we honestly sought to be better qualified for usefulness in His service. He left Lima with its highest honors, and went to the Methodist Theological Seminary at Concord, New Hampshire. A few years later, we met, as members of the Genesee Conference of the M. E. Church.

In the meantime, troubles had sprung up in the Conference. The Rev. Asa Abell, then presiding elder of the Genesee district, held a camp-meeting near Byron, Genesee county, N. Y. He was assisted by Fay H. Purdy, whose labors as an evangelist were attended with remarkable success. A revival of God's work broke out in power. Many of the old preachers who had become almost discouraged in standing up for old-fashioned Methodism, were greatly strengthened. Others of the preachers and people received the blessing of holiness, with the power of the Holy Ghost.

On the other hand, a few of the members of the Conference had united with secret societies. The murder of Morgan was fresh in the minds of the people, and they looked with jealousy upon all associations of a character similar to that which was stained with the blood of the murdered man. At the session of the Conference at which we joined, an able pamphlet, written by Rev. C. D. Burlingham, against ministers uniting with secret societies—especially with the Odd Fellows and Masons—was circulated by Rev. Eleazer Thomas. A great excitement followed. A prominent member of the Conference—now

filling one of the highest offices of the M. E. Church—declared with emphasis that “he would leave the Church before he would the Lodge.” A compromise was effected, which, by deferring the crisis, made the mischief greater. A resolution was passed, to the effect that the whole subject should be dropped, and nothing should be done calculated to produce agitation. Each party construed this according to their preferences. Those, however, who belonged to secret societies, kept up their associations with them, and influenced all to join they could.

In many parts of the Conference, the work of God went on in power. The camp-meetings, especially, were seasons of wonderful manifestations of the Divine presence. The members generally who attended these meetings, consecrated themselves more fully to God, and went home to live according to their vows as Christians and as Methodists. Olean and Genesee districts were especially favored with the outpouring of the Spirit. The secret-society men and formalists were alarmed. They were at home in formal churches, and in superficial revivals; but they could do nothing with the thorough work of God. Where that broke out they were not wanted; and many of the best appointments of the Conference insisted upon having live preachers—men full of faith and of the Holy Ghost.

The work of God was called fanaticism by the formal preachers, and it was resolved to put it down. The first step was, to get control of the districts. Dr. Luckey was taken from the East Genesee Conference, and made presiding elder of the Genesee district. But he at once fell in with the work, pronounced it old-fashioned Methodism, and did all in his power to promote it. *He was not allowed to remain.* Mr. Stiles was a young preacher, of good address, and he had hitherto been in those parts of the Conference comparatively free from religious excitement. He was appointed to the district, doubtless with

the expectation that he would take sides against the work going on, and yet, by his eloquence and suavity of manners, carry the people with him. Never were hopes more signally disappointed. Though, from exaggerated and false reports, which were freely circulated, he was prejudiced against the work in advance; yet, as soon as he came in contact with it, he recognized it as the work of God, and under his administration the work went on more vigorously than ever. He was greatly blessed in his own soul, and encouraged the people to seek all the grace that was promised them in the Gospel.

Those who had hoped for different results were indignant. At the next session of the Conference, they brought charges against him of mal-administration. They were prosecuted with vigor. We undertook his defense; and so exasperated were the opposing counsel, that one of them took hold of us, to put us down by force. The party drill was not perfect, and he was acquitted. But a secret conspiracy was more successful. About thirty of the preachers conspired together not to take work unless Messrs. Stiles and Kingsley—who both favored the work of God going on in the Church—were removed from the cabinet. Feeling assured that they would be removed, they asked to be transferred to the Cincinnati Conference; and their request, thus made under pressure, was granted. Mr. Stiles was stationed by the bishop at Union Chapel, Cincinnati, where he labored successfully for one year. At the next session of the Conference, he was, by the request of a large number of people, re-transferred and stationed at Albion.

At the same session, we were tried on a charge of "Immoral conduct," for writing an article entitled "New-School Methodism." We stated publicly that we would correct the representations we had made, if the parties concerned would say they were not true. We showed that the article did not contain the sentiments charged;

but a majority of the Conference had committed themselves in a secret meeting to our condemnation, and we were condemned accordingly, and sentenced to be reprimanded by the bishop. After this, a friend of ours issued the article in a tract form, and gave a short account of the trial and published it over his own signature. The presiding elder, Rev. A. D. Wilbor, asked this friend—George W. Estes—if he wrote the tract. He replied, he did.—The presiding elder, without hesitation, gave him license to preach. At the next Conference we were tried for “contumacy,” for publishing and circulating this very tract. We proved by Mr. Estes that we had nothing to do whatever with publishing this tract. One witness only testified that we handed him a package, and his testimony was impeached. On this charge and testimony, we were expelled from the Conference and the Church—the presiding elder that licensed the author of the tract voting for our expulsion.

Mr. Stiles acted as our counsel, and made a bold and masterly plea. For this he was told, in language inelegant but expressive, that “his head must come off next.” Mr. Stiles went back to Albion, where he labored with acceptability and success. We joined on probation at Pekin, where we had last labored, and were, by a unanimous vote of the society, licensed to exhort. In the course of the year, we attended a meeting at Mr. Stiles’ church, and after Rev. B. I. Ives preached, we exhorted.

About nine miles east from Albion, on the railroad from Niagara Falls, is the village of Holley. It contains a Presbyterian and a Baptist Church, but the Methodists never have succeeded in getting a foothold there. There are, or were, two or three Methodist families who held their membership on the adjoining circuit. Mr. Stiles, while stationed at Albion, preached regularly in this place on a week-day evening, in the Presbyterian Church. There

was no Methodist meeting at that time that his appointment could affect, in the remotest degree. *The nearest Methodist appointment at any time was three miles distant, and that on the Sabbath.* The circuit preacher, however, regarded Mr. Stiles' appointment as an invasion of his parish. He procured an order from the presiding elder, Rev. A. D. Wilbor, forbidding Mr. Stiles to preach in Holley without his consent. To this prohibition, Mr. Stiles, very properly, paid not the slightest respect. The Discipline no where gives a presiding elder any authority to issue any such command.

At the next Conference, Mr. Stiles was brought to trial. He was charged with "contumacy," for allowing us to exhort in his Church, and for preaching on another man's circuit without his consent. He made an able and manly defense; but all was of no avail. *He was expelled from the Conference and the Church.*

That a spotless, devoted, able minister of Jesus Christ, could be treated in this manner in this age of the world, by men professing godliness, seems incredible. It is also surprising that such outrages upon the dearest rights of man could be perpetrated in this country, and so little notice be taken of them by the periodicals of the day. The Rev. Wm. Hosmer, in his able and fearless paper, the *Northern Independent*, spoke out clearly, and with just indignation, against such unmitigated wickedness. But the other Methodist papers were silent. How different the course taken by these papers in the recent case of Stephen H. Tyng! And yet the treatment of Mr. Stiles involved by far the greater perversion of justice. Mr. Tyng went in the vicinity of a church of his own denomination. Mr. Stiles preached three miles away from the nearest Methodist Church. Mr. Tyng *violated* an explicit canon of his church. Mr. Stiles transgressed no rule of his denomination, but obeyed one that explicitly enjoined him

to do just as he did. It reads as follows: "You have nothing to do but to save souls; therefore, spend and be spent in this work; and *go always not only to those that want you, but to those that want you most.* Observe! it is not your business only to preach so many times, and to take care of this or that society; but to save as many as you can; to bring as many sinners as you can to repentance, and with all your power to build them up in that holiness without which they cannot see the Lord." Mr. Stiles' offense consisted in his conscientious observance of this, the eleventh rule of a preacher's conduct, as prescribed by the Discipline, by which he had promised to be governed. Mr. Tyng was reproved by the bishop,—Mr. Stiles was excommunicated from the Church! If the Episcopal Church chastised with whips, the Methodist Episcopal Church chastised with scorpions.

We see that the General Conference of the M. E. Church, at its late session, repealed the censure which, thirty-two years ago, it passed upon one of its most devoted and persecuted ministers, for "lecturing upon and in favor of modern abolitionism." We trust that they were influenced by a sense of justice, and not by the fact that "modern abolitionism" has triumphed, notwithstanding the General Conference of 1836 pledged itself "to use all prudent means to put it down," and almost unanimously resolved "That they are decidedly opposed to modern abolitionism, and wholly disclaim any right, wish or intention to interfere in the civil and political relation between master and slave, as it exists in the slaveholding States of this Union." If the love of righteousness is the motive, let the precedent be followed, and the vote be repealed by which Mr. Stiles was expelled from the Conference and the Church.

The expulsion of Mr. Stiles was followed by the withdrawal of nearly all its spiritual members from the M. E. Church at Albion. They at once organized under the con-

gregational form of government, and chose him for their pastor. He proceeded to the erection of a large and commodious house of worship. It was dedicated in June, 1860—Rev. E. Bowen, D. D., of the Oneida Conference of the M. E. Church, preaching on the occasion from I Cor. vi. 20, to a congregation, it was estimated, of one thousand three hundred persons. Rev. B. I. Ives preached a powerful sermon in the evening from the words, “We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.”

On the 23d of August, 1860, a convention of fifteen preachers and about eighty laymen was held at Pekin, Niagara county, N. Y. A Discipline was adopted, and the Free Methodist Church was organized as a connectional body. Mr. Stiles took part in the convention, and he and his people came into the new organization. In it he labored with great efficiency until his death.

Some of the preachers and members who had hitherto sympathized with those who had been expelled, opposed strongly the new organization. They held meetings by themselves, and went on in an irresponsible, lawless manner. In opposition to the Free Methodists, they called themselves Nazarites. Some of the leading ones belonged to the M. E. Church; others wished to maintain as near a relation to it as they could; all united in denouncing vehemently the formation of the new Church. Still, they professed more religion than ever. When men are determined upon being blessed, but will not obey God, the devil will give them an elation of soul that readily passes with many for a manifestation of the presence of the Holy Spirit. The counterfeit so closely resembles the genuine, that experienced believers are often deceived. These persons referred to went on from one thing to another, until they plunged into wild excesses and extravagances. Many of the people of God were alarmed, and became afraid of the real operations of the Holy Spirit. Mr. Stiles was

keenly alive to the reproach which these excesses brought upon the cause of God. He took a decided stand against them; and if, in his zeal, he sometimes went too far, it was no more than was to be naturally looked for under the circumstances. Even John Wesley, with his deep experience, was led into a similar error. He says, "We acknowledged our having grieved the Spirit by blaspheming his work among us—imputing it either to nature, to the force of imagination and animal spirits, or even to the delusion of the devil." Mr. Stiles was equally frank in confessing the mistake he had made in treating some as fanatical who were really led by the Spirit of God. He would not, knowingly, discourage the weakest of God's children; but he was solicitous, in the extreme, that the work of God should be kept pure, and that there should be no commingling of strange fire with the true.

His love for souls was intense, and the ardor with which he labored for their salvation was too great for his physical strength. He fell a martyr to his work. Worn out by labor and care, he was attacked by the fatal typhoid fever, and after hovering a few days between time and eternity, his happy spirit took its upward flight to the Paradise of God. Much of the time during his sickness he was delirious; but even then his mind dwelt on Divine things.—"Bring me," he cried out, "some cold water from the well. I want to contrast it with the water of life which I shall soon drink." When rational, he felt a complete triumph over death. He said to us, when watching with him a short time before he left us, "The Lord has greatly blessed me, and I shall go straight to glory." He gradually grew weaker, until, on Thursday evening, the 7th of May, 1863, he passed over the Jordan of death without a struggle or a groan. His funeral was attended by an immense congregation—the large Free Church being crowded to its utmost, and hundreds standing upon the outside. The

Rev. Wm. Hosmer preached an excellent sermon from the appropriate words, "For he endured as seeing Him that is invisible."

We feel sad, and at times almost discouraged, as we think of the many able, faithful preachers with whom we once labored, whom God has taken away in their prime, leaving the field to be cultivated by us feeblers. But God's ways are inscrutable. It is only for those who remain, to work while we may, remembering that time is short. *Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.*



Yours affectionately
B. J. Roberts

A RUNNING SKETCH.

BY REV. B. T. ROBERTS.

I HAVE nothing good to say of myself. But the praise of God shall be continually in my mouth. What do I not owe to Divine grace? I am a debtor to the boundless mercy of God to a degree that can never be expressed. My inclinations by nature are to evil. My early associates, many of them, went to ruin. But God's Spirit, from my earliest recollections, strove with me and restrained me. I never drank wine but once, and that was at a New Year's call. Tobacco I never used, and profanity I abhorred. It was all of grace.

A Presbyterian minister came to me one day, when a boy, and invited me to go to Sabbath School. I went. I committed many chapters of the Bible to memory. At one lesson I recited the whole of the epistle of James. Years after, I studied law. Many of my associates openly rejected the Bible; but my knowledge of its contents not only kept me from infidelity, but enabled me to expose and refute their sophistical objections. Yet I was far from being a Christian. I was ambitious, proud and worldly. At times I was powerfully convicted; but I thought it was the part of manliness to resist as long as possible.—Conviction left me, and my heart became hard.

At length it pleased God to answer the prayer of my friends in my behalf. He awakened me to a sense of my lost condition. The instrumentality was very humble. A pious, illiterate cooper—a very bad stammerer—gave in his testimony at a regular Sabbath afternoon prayer-meeting. I was there by invitation of friends, and his testi-

mony found way to my heart. There was no special religious interest, but I felt it was my duty to become a Christian. I commenced to pray. It was hard work, but God encouraged me to persevere. As the light of the Spirit shone, I gave up one thing and another; but I clung to my profession. For three weeks or more, I plead with the Lord to convert me; but to let me have my choice in the business I would follow. Many who had power with God prayed for me; but I had to yield. Christ demanded an unconditional surrender. I made it. The joys of pardon and peace flowed into my soul. My cup was full—my happiness was unspeakable.

The study of law was abandoned. I completed the college course at Middletown, Conn., in 1848, receiving one of the honors of the class. The same fall I joined the Genesee Conference of the M. E. Church, and was stationed at Caryville. The society was weak, and the church edifice small. By the blessing of God, there was a good accession to the church, and the house of worship was enlarged. In May of the next year, I was married to Miss Ellen L. Stow, of New York. At the close of the year, we were stationed at Pike, Wyoming county, N. Y. Here we labored two years, and God gave us a precious revival. A camp-meeting held at Collins, in the year 1849, was made a great blessing to my soul. The subject of holiness received special attention. Rev. Eleazar Thomas, presiding elder of the district, was then a flame of fire. Mrs. Palmer attended the meeting, and labored for the promotion of holiness with great zeal and success. While I was at Middletown, Dr. Redfield held a protracted meeting in the Methodist church. Such scenes of spiritual power I never had witnessed. The convictions I there received never left me. At the camp-meeting they were greatly increased. Two paths were distinctly marked out before me. I saw that I might be a popular preacher, gain ap-

plause, do but little good in reality, and at last lose my soul. Or I saw that I might take the narrow way, declare the whole truth as it is in Jesus, meet with persecution and opposition, but see a thorough work of grace go on, and gain Heaven. Grace was given to make the better choice. I deliberately gave myself anew to the Lord, to declare the whole truth as it is in Jesus, and to take the narrow way. The blessing came. The Spirit fell upon me in an overwhelming degree. I received a power to labor such as I had never possessed before. This consecration has never been taken back. I have many times had to humble myself before the Lord for having grieved his Spirit. I have been but an unprofitable servant. It is by grace alone that I am saved. Yet the determination is fixed, to obey the Lord and take the narrow way, come what will.

Our next appointment was Rushford, N. Y. The Spirit of the Lord was with us all the year, and good was done. The next year we were stationed at Niagara street, Buffalo. We found the congregation run down, the state of spirituality low, and the people greatly discouraged. The temptation to lower the standard was strong; but God kept us from compromising. Dr. Redfield was with us several weeks, and held a protracted meeting. A great interest in the community was excited; but we met with unexpected opposition from ministers occupying a high official position in the Church, and the progress of the revival was stayed.

While here, my attention was drawn to the evils of the pew system. I saw that the house of God **MUST BE FREE** for all who choose to attend, if the masses would be reached and saved. I began to write and preach upon the subject. The Niagara street Church was in debt; and I offered to see the debt paid off if they would make the house free. The offer was declined. Thousands of dollars were after-

wards expended in rebuilding and beautifying it; all the modern expedients for raising money—such as re-selling the pews, holding fairs and festivals, and giving popular lectures—were resorted to in order to pay off the indebtedness. But all these efforts were unavailing—the church passed into the hands of the enemies of Jesus, and is now owned and occupied as a place of worship by the lineal and religious descendants of those who put the blessed Saviour to death. It has become a Jewish tabernacle.

From Buffalo we were appointed to labor in Brockport. The Lord favored us here with a thorough and extensive revival. Many precious souls were brought into the enjoyment of the justifying and sanctifying grace of God. At the close of two years we went to Albion. We followed that man of God, Wm. C. Kendall, under whose labors there had been a most powerful revival. We entered into his labors, and the church enjoyed a good degree of prosperity. While at Albion, I wrote an article for the *Northern Independent*, entitled “New-School Methodism.” There was already a strongly-marked division among the preachers of the Conference: some of them being committed to the doctrines of holiness and the “old paths” of spiritual religion generally, and others sympathizing with the more popular forms of worship—the leading ones of the latter class belonging generally to the Masons or Odd-Fellows. Ministers belonging to the latter class had published what we considered very unkind and unjust things against us. To correct the impressions they were making, I published in the *Northern Independent* the article referred to. I endeavored to write with the utmost fairness. I have looked over the article since with all the impartiality I could command, and can see in it nothing to condemn. One of the bitterest opposers we have ever had, said, “Your article is written in as mild and candid a tone as such facts can be stated in.” A bill

of charges was brought against me for writing that article. I will not enter into details; but I was voted guilty of "Immoral and unchristian conduct," for writing that article. Sentence—"Reproof by the Chair." I received the reproof, and was sent to Peking. The Lord again favored us with a gracious revival. The work of God went on the entire year. The action of the Conference did not appear to cripple my influence. At the next session of the Conference, I was charged with "contumacy" in publishing a second edition of "New-School Methodism." On the trial, it appeared that I had no part in getting out the second edition; and had no knowledge that its publication was intended. One preacher testified that I handed him a package. On this charge and testimony I was turned out of the Church. Six other preachers were subsequently excluded from the Church on frivolous pretexts. We appealed to the General Conference. Our appeals, with one exception, were disregarded. The General Conference refused to investigate these matters.

Here was a trial such as I had never anticipated. But Jesus did not forsake me. I never felt his girding power as on that occasion. Satan told me I would have nothing to do. But his suggestions have all proved false. I have been most sorely assailed—it seemed as if hell would overpower me at times; but Jesus has proved victorious. Bless His name! In Him will I trust, and He has promised to keep me to the end.

The experiences through which I have passed, have had a good effect in many ways. They have cured me of sectarian bigotry. I have lost my denominational zeal. I feel a deep sympathy with every enterprise that has a tendency to promote the kingdom of Christ in its purity.

I have learned to rely more fully on God. He does not appear to me as a Being afar off—who anciently felt an interest in those who endeavored to serve Him, but who

now makes less marked interpositions in behalf of His children. He is to me the Ever-present, LIVING GOD. To Him I go with confidence, with all my wants, and all my complaints. I endeavor to do my duty, and then leave the disposal of events with my Heavenly Father. I have learned, from the things which I have suffered, to be extremely cautious in giving countenance to any measures that bear oppressively upon any individual. The exercise of Church Discipline sometimes becomes necessary; but it ought to be the last resort. We should feel a deep sympathy with all—even the erring.

To-day my soul is happy in God. He is leading me by His Spirit. I know but little, comparatively, of saving grace; but I am pressing on. I have commenced anew to seek the Lord, and my business shall be to seek for Him the rest of my days, as earnestly as the covetous man seeks for gold. In Him is fullness of joy. I heed not labors and trials, if I may only have a consciousness of the presence and approbation of my Heavenly Father. He gives me plenty of work, and helps me in doing it. My special mission is to preach the Gospel to the poor. I believe that churches should be as free as the grace we preach. The Lord allowed me to be thrust out as I was, because He saw that in this manner this work could be carried on to the best advantage. The work is progressing, and I expect to live to see FREE churches all over the land—especially in cities, where the poor are congregated. This is a blessed work! I know that I am at my Master's business. He has compassion upon me. LIKE AS A FATHER PITIETH HIS CHILDREN, SO THE LORD PITIETH THEM THAT TRUST IN HIM: FOR HE KNOWETH OUR FRAME: HE REMEMBERETH THAT WE ARE DUST.

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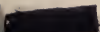
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